

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF WORKERS FOR THE BLIND

THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR OVERSEAS BLIND,
NEW YORK AND PARIS,

and

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
LONDON,

with the participation of

THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION AND U.N.E.S.C.O.

held at

MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD

(by kind permission of the Warden and Fellows)

August 4th - 12th, 1949

Published by

THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR OVERSEAS BLIND, INC.
(New York and Paris)

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THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND (London)

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PART I

ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

THE International Conference of Workers for the Blind on The Place of the Blind in the Modern World was called because workers for the blind felt an imperative need to get together and discuss the many new problems which had arisen since the second World War. Representatives of the National Institute for the Blind, London, and the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., New York and Paris, set up an Organising Committee, consisting of :—

<i>Chairman</i> ...	... Robert B. Irwin, LL.D., Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (U.S.A.).
<i>Vice-Chairman</i> ...	... Monsieur Georges L. Raverat, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (U.S.A.).
<i>Secretary</i> ...	... Mr. W. McG. Eagar, C.B.E., M.A. (United Kingdom.)
	Gabriel Farrell, B.S., B.D., D.D. (U.S.A.), and Alderman N. Garrow, J.P. (United Kingdom).

It was agreed that practical results were most likely to be obtained by inviting the outstanding full-time workers for the blind in European countries and the United States. The American delegation thus selected was much assisted by the inclusion of Colonel E. A. Baker, M.C., O.B.E., of Toronto. Invitations to participate in the Conference and to nominate observers were also sent to the United Nations, and its appropriate specialised agencies. The delegates were for the most part chosen either by the Organising Committee itself, or selected by the Organising Committee from lists of nominees submitted by Associations for the Blind in the various countries. For practical reasons, the number of representatives from each country had to be strictly limited. Travel difficulties and other circumstances prevented some of the invited delegates from attending; the assemblage did not include representatives of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Spain, the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia. Their absence and that of Herr Hans Voigt, an invited German delegate, who was unable to travel owing to illness, was much regretted. All present learned with sincere regret that Alderman Garrow was prevented by illness from attending the Conference in which he was so deeply interested; his counsel and inspiration would have been of great value.

The subjects selected for discussion were those which would form integral parts of the minimum programme of blind welfare. It was regretfully decided that in ten days (the utmost limit of time

available), the fundamentally important subject of education could not be adequately discussed, in addition to the minimum programme of adult welfare.

The Organising Committee is especially grateful to the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., and the National Institute for the Blind, for organising and financing the Conference. Without their initiative and support the Conference could not have been held. Sincere thanks are also due to Merton College, Oxford, for opening its doors to the Conference for a period of ten days. The intellectual atmosphere and classic surroundings gave an air of dignity to the whole gathering. The hospitality of the officials of the College and University was constantly evident.

The immediate object of the Conference was to draft a series of conclusions which, taken together, should, in the opinion of the delegates, form a minimum programme for the blind in any civilised country. Conclusions were to be expressed in such general terms as to form a set of fundamental principles upon which any sound programme for the blind could be built.

The method of procedure was to submit at the opening of each day's Session a draft resolution which formed the topic of the day. The delegates then freely discussed the wording and implications of the resolution, focusing upon the subject a breadth of view and a wealth of experience perhaps never before brought together in a single gathering. It is interesting to note that, although there was the greatest diversity of approach by persons with a wide variety of social philosophies, the final wording of the resolutions was adopted unanimously. In hammering out these resolutions, there was an exchange of views and experiences of great value to those participating.

Much time at the Conference was saved by preparing in advance, and distributing among the delegates (in Braille and letter-press), a body of well-organised data regarding the condition of the blind and the work done on their behalf in the countries from which the delegates had come. The material was collected through a questionnaire sent out by the Organising Committee several months in advance of the meeting. This made it unnecessary for delegates to go into detail during the Sessions regarding the work carried on in their respective countries. This Resumé of factual information (see page 16) will be of value to students of work for the blind for years to come.

The statistical data which the Resumé contains would have been easier to collate had there been an internationally accepted definition of blindness, and the Conference has requested the World Health

Organisation to take the lead in securing the adoption of such a definition.

In addition to the formulation of a minimum national and international programme of services to the blind, there were other results of the Oxford Conference which will be of great significance to the welfare of the blind:—

(1) While the delegates were gathered together steps were spontaneously taken to prepare definite plans for holding an International Conference in 1951 on the education of blind children.

(2) The delegates were so impressed with the importance of united action among workers for the blind throughout the world that they resolved to set up a Planning Committee, with power to organise a permanent International Organisation for the welfare of the blind. This Planning Committee held its second meeting in Paris in February, 1950. The American Foundation for Overseas Blind has offered to provide it temporarily with an office and secretarial staff in Paris. The Conference resolved, however, that other costs of the Committee, including the travelling expenses of its members, should be defrayed by agencies for the blind in the countries represented at Oxford.

(3) Perhaps the most important result of the entire Conference was the active interest which the United Nations and its specialised agencies—in particular, U.N.E.S.C.O., the World Health Organisation, and the International Labour Organisation—have taken in its recommendations. The Division of Social Activities of the United Nations is giving careful study to this subject. The Social Commission, at its Fifth Session, held at Lake Success in December, 1949, gave considerable time to the discussion of services to the blind which might be rendered by the United Nations. The Social Commission instructed the Secretary-General to submit a proposed programme of service to the blind for consideration at the Sixth Session of the Social Commission. It also submitted a resolution embodying a programme for the blind, for consideration by the Economic and Social Council. If sufficient funds are made available to implement a programme to be developed by the United Nations, future historians may look back to the Oxford Conference as the beginning of a new era in the welfare of the blind throughout the world.

ROBERT B. IRWIN,
Chairman of the Conference.

February, 1950.

POSTSCRIPT

As the Vice-Chairman and the Secretary of the Conference, we are reluctant to be concerned with the publication of this Report without paying our tribute to Dr. Robert B. Irwin, whose unfailingly wise and genial Chairmanship played a very large part in the Conference's undoubted success. Dr. Irwin is one of the blind men whose life-long devotion to the cause of their blind fellows has been an inspiration to such men as ourselves, who have the gift of sight and have had the privilege of working for the blind in our own countries and internationally. It so happens that we, as well as Dr. Irwin, are approaching the age at which we must retire from active responsibilities. Before doing so, we wish to express, not only for ourselves but for blind people and workers for the blind throughout the world, our gratitude and affection to Robert Irwin, whose long life of service has been fittingly crowned by the Oxford Conference of 1949, over which he presided.

We wish also to pay our tribute of gratitude to the officers and staff of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., and the National Institute for the Blind, whose enthusiasm, no less than their ability, overcame all difficulties in the mechanics of such a Conference as this. In particular we wish to mention Mr. Eric T. Boulter, Assistant European Director of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., and Mr. J. E. Jarvis, International Correspondent of the National Institute for the Blind. Of the other staff members of the two organisations responsible for the organisation of the Conference, we need only say that they worked indefatigably, without regard to the clock, and that their keen interest in the purpose of the Conference and in the delegates from all countries was a perfect example of the spirit in which work for the welfare of the blind should be, and fortunately is, carried on.

GEORGES L. RAVERAT,
Vice-Chairman of the Conference.

W. MCG. EAGAR,
Secretary to the Conference.

February, 1950.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE

Organising Committee

*Robert B. Irwin, LL.D., Executive Director,
American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., 22 West
17th Street, New York, 11, New York. (*Chairman of
Conference*).

Monsieur Georges L. Raverat, European Director,
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Montevideo, Paris, 16 (*Vice-Chairman of Conference*).

Mr. W. McG. Eagar, C.B.E., M.A., Secretary-General,
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Dr. Karl Trapny, Director,
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Observer—

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DENMARK

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Observer

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- Miss B. E. Knox, Organising Secretary,
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FINLAND

- *Mr. Eero Hakkinen, Chairman of the Board of Administrators,
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- *Monsieur Paul Guinot, President,
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- *Monsieur Henri Amblard, Member of the Comité National pour
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*Professor Paolo Bentivoglio, President,
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*Captain Giovanni Quagliotti, Press Officer, Italian Union of
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- *Dr. Vladimir Dolanski, President,
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- *Herr Ernst Retsler, President,
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Observer—
*Herr Charles Hedkvist, Secretary,
De Blindas Förening, Majorsgatan, 12, Stockholm.

SWITZERLAND

- *Dr. E. Spahr, President,
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*Monsieur Louis Jacot, Vice-President,
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St. Dunstan's, 191 Marylebone Road, London, N.W.1.
Mr. E. H. Getliff, Hon. Registrar,
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*Mr. T. H. Smith, Secretary,
National League of the Blind, 262 Langham Road, London,
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Mr. S. W. Starling, General Secretary,
National Association of Workshops for the Blind, 257
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Observer—
Miss Mary G. Thomas,
National Institute for the Blind, 224 Gt. Portland Street,
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Scotland

- Mr. C. H. W. G. Anderson, T.D., B.Sc., A.B.Ps.S., F.R.S.E.,
Headmaster and Superintendent,
The Royal Blind School, Craigmillar Park, Edinburgh, 9.
Mr. James Cormack, Superintendent,
Edinburgh and S.E. of Scotland Society for Teaching the
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Northern Ireland

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. Michael J. Shortley, Director,
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*Mr. Joseph F. Clunk, Chief, Services for the Blind,
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Washington, 25, D.C.

Mr. Alfred Allen, Secretary General,
American Association of Workers for the Blind, 15 West 16th
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*Mr. Eric T. Boulter, Assistant European Director,
American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., 22 West
17th Street, New York, 11, N.Y.

Observer—

Mr. Irving J. Fasteau,
Social Service Attaché, American Embassy, 2 Avenue
Gabriel, Paris.

*Note.—Members of the Organising Committee were also delegates of
their respective countries.*

An asterisk indicates that the delegate or member of staff is blind.

In Attendance*Assistant Secretary to Conference*

*Mr. J. E. Jarvis, M.A.,
National Institute for the Blind.

Staff

Miss Ruth Wilcox,
American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc.

Mlle. M. Régnier.

Miss O. Taphouse,
National Institute for the Blind.

Miss J. Pilcher.

Miss D. Holloway.

Miss D. Flann.

Mr. Jermy.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I—Ascertainment

1. What is the accepted definition of blindness in your country :
 (a) for children?
 (b) for adults?
2. What authority prescribes it, and for what purpose is it used?
3. What is the known or estimated number of blind persons, male and female? What is the source of these figures?
4. What is the proportion of blind persons per 100,000 of the general population?

Part II—Rehabilitation and Training

5. Are any arrangements made to help newly-blinded adults to adjust themselves to blindness? If so, what is their nature and extent?
6. What provision is made and by whom for :
 (a) the training and maintenance whilst under training of blind persons for work in :
 (i) special workshops for the blind?
 (ii) factories?
 (b) the training of the blind for professional and clerical work?
 (c) any other occupations?

Part III—Employment

7. How many blind persons are employed in your country :
 (a) in special workshops?
 (b) in manual and other occupations at home?
 (c) in business on their own account?
 (d) in factories?
 (e) in clerical work, *e.g.*, shorthand, typewriting and telephony?
 (f) as commercial representatives?
 (g) in professions?
 (h) in any other occupations?
8. What articles do the blind produce :
 (a) in special workshops?
 (b) in their homes?
9. What operations do the blind perform in factories?
10. What careers do the professional blind follow?

Part IV—Economic Provision

11. Are any special pensions or allowances given to the blind?
12. Do the blind benefit from any system of social security? If so, on what conditions?
13. Are the blind granted any remission of taxes? If so, in what form?
14. What arrangements are made to supplement the earnings of blind workers who are unable to earn a living wage?
15. Give details of any other special financial assistance which the blind receive.
16. Does your Government or any other public authority make special arrangements to purchase goods made by the blind, or to assist blind workers in any other way?

Part V—Care of the Blind at Home

17. What services are provided for blind persons who live at home?
Who is responsible for such services?
18. Are any persons employed to visit the blind and teach them in their own homes? If so, who employs them?
19. Is there any organised system of help for the blind by unpaid volunteers?
20. What arrangements are made for training workers for the blind?

Part VI—Homes for the Blind

21. How many Homes for the Blind are there? By whom have they been established and financed?
22. Are your Homes for separate sexes, or mixed? Are they wholly or mainly for aged blind people?
23. Have you any Homes for blind people who also suffer from other handicaps, *e.g.*, deafness, mental defects, epilepsy, etc.?

Part VII—Responsibility for the Blind

24. Is work for the blind carried on in whole or in part by :
 - (a) the national Government?
 - (b) regional authorities?
 - (c) local authorities?
 - (d) private organisations?
25. What is the nature and extent of the responsibility of each of the above bodies?
26. Do any private or voluntary organisations work for the blind independently or on behalf of any public authorities? Do they receive any financial assistance from public funds?

Part VIII—Legislation

27. What is the effect of legislation on the welfare of the blind?
28. Through which Ministries or Government Departments is any existing legislation operated?

Part IX—Special Facilities for the Blind

29. Give details of any special facilities which the blind enjoy when travelling, *e.g.*, free passes, reduced fares, etc.
30. Who manufactures and distributes :
 - (a) embossed books for the blind?
 - (b) apparatus for the blind?
 and how is the production of such books and apparatus financed?
31. Does your Government remit Customs Duty on apparatus for the blind imported from other countries? If so, on what conditions?
32. Are Talking Books manufactured and distributed? If so, to what extent?
33. Are there any special arrangements for the distribution of radio sets to the blind, either free or at reduced cost? Do the blind enjoy free radio receiving licences?

RESUMÉ

The following résumé falls into two sections :—

- I. GENERAL OUTLINE.
- II. DETAILS OF EACH COUNTRY.

SECTION 1

PART I.—ASCERTAINMENT

Children : The same definition of blindness is generally used for children and adults, but, where a distinction is made, children who are unable to read printed school-books, or, as it is sometimes expressed, to be educated by methods involving the use of sight are classified as blind.

Adults : Some countries define blindness in practical terms and others in measurements of visual acuity, sometimes qualifying the practical definition. The practical definitions are that a person is blind if :—

- (1) He cannot find his way without guidance in unfamiliar surroundings.
- (2) He cannot count fingers separately at given distances, *e.g.*, one metre or two metres.
- (3) His sight is economically valueless.
- (4) His sight is so defective that he cannot follow his ordinary occupation.

Any or all of these definitions may apply.

The most exactly worded definition in ophthalmic terms is that generally adopted in the U.S.A., in respect of both children and adults, namely : " Having visual acuity not exceeding 20/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with correcting lenses, or visual acuity greater than 20/200, but with a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees."

In Austria and in Germany persons with less than 1/25 of sight are blind ; in France, war-blinded persons having less than 1/10 central vision and civilians having less than 1/20 are blind, and in Holland the standard of blindness is 1/20.

In Great Britain, the practical definition is :—" So blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential." Ophthalmologists are required to give a definition in those practical

terms, but for their guidance it is laid down that persons with over 6/60 (Snellen) are not blind, and with less than 3/60 (Snellen) they are. With vision between 3/60 and 6/60 they may be classified as blind or not blind, according to the fullness or restriction of the field of vision.

Authority prescribing the definition and the purpose for which it is used. In the case of children, the definition is generally laid down by the Education Authority. Where adults are concerned, the Ministry of Pensions, Ministry of Social Insurance, or Ministry of Health usually require a certificate of blindness, supported by medical evidence before persons claiming to be blind can benefit by legislation enacted in favour of the blind.

Known or estimated number of blind persons ; source of information.—In many cases, the figures were based on Census returns, which are almost always an under-statement where physical handicaps are concerned. At the present time, Census returns may be even more than usually unreliable as no recent Census has been taken. For one country a Census of 1912 and for another a Census of 1921 were quoted.

The great movements of population due to the war, especially in Austria, Germany and Poland, made accurate enumeration particularly difficult in those countries.

The statistics received, such as they are, bear out the view that, unless registration secures some material advantage, only a fraction of the blind population of any country feel it worth while to make their blindness known.

Only a few countries sending in returns differentiated between males and females in their figures, and no attempt at such differentiation has been made in the table given on page 18.

Proportion of blind persons per 100,000 of the population.—In view of what has been said it is not surprising that the table shows a wide range in the proportion of blind persons per 100,000 of the population. The fact that the figures vary from under 50 to 300 per 100,000 in countries where social conditions are not remarkably different, suggests either that ascertainment is incomplete in some countries, or that the definition is too wide or alternatively too narrow. It is not possible to relate these statistics to an absolute standard, but it is interesting that in England and Wales and in the United States (countries where the enumeration of the blind might be expected to be reasonably complete in view of the important benefits attaching to notification) the number of blind per 100,000 is the same, *i.e.*, 175.

INCIDENCE OF BLINDNESS

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of blind</i>	<i>Number per 100,000</i>	<i>Method of Ascertainment</i>
Austria	4,000	66	Census
Belgium	3,684	43	Government enquiry
Bulgaria	4,000	57	Census
Canada	18,200	150	Estimate
Denmark	4,000	100	Estimate
Eire	7,000	233	do.
England and Wales ...	76,009	175	*Register
Finland	3,000	75	Estimate
France	42,663	102	Census
Germany	42,000	60	Estimate
Greece... ..	5,850	84	Census
Holland	4,750	40-50	Government enquiry
Hungary	10,000	100	Estimate
Italy	27,000	57	do.
Northern Ireland ...	3,600	300	do.
Norway	2,400	80	do.
Poland	20,000	80	do.
Scotland	8,632	166	*Register
Spain	15,000	57	Estimate
Sweden	6,014	100	Census
Switzerland	2,500	50-60	Estimate
U.S.A.... ..	230,354	175	do.

For Algiers two estimates (17,895 and 25,000 blind) are offered, but no figure per 100,000 of the population.

*Register of the blind includes all persons certified to be blind after examination by an ophthalmic surgeon.

PART II.—REHABILITATION AND TRAINING

Arrangements made to help the newly-blind to adjust themselves.—

In a number of countries the newly-blind are visited by social workers or trained home teachers, whose aim is to help both the blind person and the family to adjust themselves to his handicap. In Norway, at the principal Eye Clinic, there is a special consultant, "whose duty it is to get into touch with those losing their sight during their stay in the hospital, studying their problem, advising them as to training and means of earning a livelihood, and giving them preliminary instruction in Braille." Residential Centres, however, which provide rehabilitation and pre-vocational training, appear to be confined to the United States and Britain.

In the United States, after preliminary visiting by a home teacher (to inform the blind person of services open to him, to give him advice on such matters as dressing and table etiquette, and to help his friends to adapt an attitude towards him which will further, and not retard, his reorientation), arrangements are made

for him to receive pre-vocational training, either at a residential or non-residential adjustment centre, the State in either case defraying the cost. The centres provide opportunities for the study of Braille, typewriting, handicrafts, household duties, gardening, etc., and training in the fullest use of the remaining senses.

In England, the war-blinded are cared for comprehensively by St. Dunstan's Organisation for Men and Women Blinded on War Service. Civilians who lose their sight in adult life may go to Homes of Recovery, maintained by the National Institute for the Blind, and a large number of men and women who can be restored to useful employment are sent to these Homes for industrial rehabilitation, by the Ministry of Labour. Steps are being taken to establish further residential rehabilitation centres.

Training of adults.—Those who become blind in adult life may be classified under three headings :—

- (1) The war-blinded. For these, whether combatants or non-combatants, training is generally provided by the State, together with maintenance during training.
- (2) Those who have lost their sight through industrial accident or industrial disease. These generally receive their training under some form of Industrial Insurance.
- (3) Those not falling under either of the above categories, but who are also likely to benefit by training.

This last group may be trained at the expense of the State or of local authorities in many countries, including Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Eire (where, however, it is reported that "arrangements are haphazard and unsatisfactory . . . and only very limited provision is made"), Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United States. In many cases maintenance is provided. Where training is not given at public expense, private and semi-private organisations sometimes make themselves responsible.

Training for factory work.—This is not general, either because in many countries the blind are not considered suitable for such work, or because work in factories is often repetitive and can be "learned on the job." A centre for basic industrial training for blind persons wishing to enter factories has, however, recently been opened by the Minister of Labour and National Service in England.

Training for clerical and professional work.—Such training is provided in a limited number of countries, either at public cost or by private organisations. In France there is training in physiotherapy and telephony. In Austria, the Institution for the Blind gives occasional training in typing and telephony.

In Britain, training is provided in physiotherapy, shorthand-typing and telephony. In Germany training is given at various centres for telephony, shorthand-typing and the lower grades of the Civil Service. In Italy, there is training in massage. In many countries, opportunities are given in schools for the blind, and at Conservatoires or Academies, for the blind student of music. In Germany, there is a department for blind students at the University of Marburg, and in a number of countries, the intellectual blind person who wishes to continue his studies after completing his general education at a school for the blind, may proceed to a University. In many of the American States public funds assist such students to secure reading services; the American Foundation for the Blind grants scholarships for such purposes, and also conducts training courses for blind persons wishing to take up blind welfare-work.

PART III.—EMPLOYMENT

Workshops.—In nearly every country, a large number of blind workers find employment in special workshops, carrying on those trades which are traditionally regarded as suited to them: the making of baskets, brushes, brooms, mats, mattresses, shoe-making and repairing, weaving, chair caning, rush-seating, machine and hand-knitting.

It would have been interesting in this section to have been able to show the relative numbers of blind persons in each of the types of employment named in the questionnaire; but this has not been possible, as there are many countries unable to give—at best—more than an approximate figure for those engaged in occupations at home, and in several countries the headings "Occupations at home," "Business on own account" and "Commercial representatives" tend to overlap.

Manual and other occupations at home.—In countries where distances between towns are great, and sheltered workshops widely scattered and few in number, a large proportion of the trained blind workers must return to their homes to carry on their manual occupations there—with more or less success. Where, as in England or Scotland, the blind home-worker is attached to an Institution for the Blind and so works under some supervision, being provided with his raw materials at special prices, having his earnings augmented from public funds, and being assisted in the marketing of his finished goods, his prospects are reasonably satisfactory. Many blind home-workers work under difficult and precarious conditions, and, without the stimulus of competition with fellow-workers they may lose interest and initiative. Some, as in France,

engage in a number of home crafts, and so try to supplement such income as they may derive from public sources where these are inadequate to meet their needs, and although this is not strictly in accord with the law, it is not as a rule dealt with severely.

Some of the returns give the numbers of blind people working on their own account as very high; in one country 25 per cent of the blind are said to be so engaged. The fact that the expression may be construed as covering the control of an important business concern at one end of the scale, and the street hawker (who may be less a seller of matches than a street-beggar) at the other, makes the classification difficult to assess. "An estimation is practically impossible" is the comment in the French reply.

Factories.—The occupations of the blind in factories (principally in the United States, England and Wales, Germany, Poland, Norway and Sweden) are various. There are at least two blind personnel managers in Britain, blind workers are engaged in dark-room photographic processes in France, in Germany light engineering, shipbuilding, textiles and chemical works have blind employees, in America twenty-four different processes in aircraft plants alone are carried out by blind persons and a blind foreman is engaged in a dye industry. In Britain, a wide field of operations include precision inspection, operation of capstan lathes, and general assembly work. In other countries, including Austria, Belgium, Finland, Holland and Northern Ireland, a smaller number of blind persons are engaged in factories, generally on processes of a repetitive type.

Clerical work.—Shorthand, typing and telephony are everywhere regarded as suitable occupations for the educated blind worker. In Holland, a special piece of telephone apparatus, using acoustic instead of light signals, has been devised for the use of blind telephonists. The National Organisation of the Blind in Spain employs about forty blind telephonists. Approximately 500 blind persons are reported from the United States as engaged in clerical work, and there are in Britain approximately 150 blind shorthand typists and 350 blind telephonists.

Commercial representatives.—From the information received, these are rare, except in the United States, where 500 were returned.

Professions.—Because the standard required of the blind professional man is very high, and training costly, the number of blind in professions must always be relatively small, and drawn chiefly from those countries where prejudice has been overcome, and public responsibility for the higher education of the blind recognised. The following are among the professions returned:—

Music, including the teaching of music, work as Church organists, professional musicians.

University lecturing.

Teaching, including school, home and craft teaching.

Ministers of Religion.

Physiotherapy.

Law.

Social work.

Business and public administration.

Individuals holding important posts include the following :— Bank manager (Belgium), journalist (Germany), chartered accountant (Northern Ireland), carillon player (Holland), Congress secretary (Sweden), Senator and judge (U.S.A.).

Other occupations.—The National Organisation of the Blind in Spain, a body set up in 1938 by State decree, and thus having strong Government support, provides a livelihood for the large majority of its 15,000 members by employing them as salesmen of lottery tickets. That this form of employment may be thought open to criticism is anticipated in the reply to the questionnaire received from Barcelona. "We are aware," says the writer, "that this system of caring for the blind will not commend itself to many of our European colleagues." He goes on, however, to point out that the money raised by the sale of the lottery tickets not only provides the blind seller with a livelihood, but should make it possible to set up throughout Spain a number of workshops in which the blind can earn wages comparable with those of seeing workers. Meanwhile, work is also provided for those capable of something demanding a better education than the selling of tickets, by employing them in one of the many clerical or semi-clerical posts (over 500 in number) available in connection with the nation-wide activities of the organisation.

PART IV.—ECONOMIC PROVISION

The sources from which a blind person may derive an income in whole or in part (including pensions, allowances, insurance benefits, etc.), are indicated in the questionnaire. He may depend on only one of these, or on more than one.

Pensions or allowances.—The blind who have lost their sight while serving in the forces are in every country entitled to a pension, and generally this is accompanied by allowances for dependants. Pensions to those civilians blinded in enemy action are also granted in many countries, again with allowances for dependents.

State Pensions.—In some countries, including Britain, Eire, Norway and some of the American states, the blind receive State

pensions, subject to certain conditions as to age and means. Pensions are granted in Sweden without means test.

Allowances.—Allowances from public funds (sometimes paid by the National Government and sometimes by local authorities) are granted in Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Eire, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Spain, and in those American states which do not give pensions as of right. The conditions under which these allowances are granted are noted in Part II of this report, under the individual countries.

Voluntary pensions.—In addition to State pensions, there are in England and Wales (and in a lesser degree in Scotland) a large number of pensions derived from voluntary sources, often originating from bequests made by charitable individuals, and sometimes dating back a century or more. These are not, like State pensions, given as of right, but are paid at the discretion of trustees to blind persons who satisfy conditions of income, residence, character, etc. Some are narrowly limited as to locality, others are reserved for certain categories (e.g., ministers of religion or their dependents, teachers, etc.), and some are given only to former employees of certain Institutions for the Blind.

Benefits under Social Security.—There are in many countries certain benefits payable to insured blind persons by virtue of the system of Social Security existing in those countries. They may include :—

- (a) Sickness or disablement benefit paid to blind persons because before they lost their sight they were insured, and blindness has ended their capacity as wage-earners.
- (b) Sickness or disablement benefit paid to them after loss of sight, while working in a special workshop or factory as insured persons, when ill-health (not due to blindness) overtakes them.
- (c) Accident benefit, payable where an insured person loses his sight owing to accident.

Countries where some or all the above-named benefits are payable include Britain, Denmark, Eire, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Italy, Switzerland.

Augmentation of wages.—In order to “compensate” for blindness, the workshop employee in Austria receives a wage 20 per cent higher than that paid for similar work in workshops for the seeing. In Finland, employed persons over 16 receive “Blind Assistance” to compensate for their handicap. In Britain and Eire, the wages of blind persons in special workshops are augmented by grants from local authorities ; in Britain the earnings of home-workers are also augmented. In France, under the legislation of

1945, workers may receive augmentation up to 3,500 fr. p.m., and in Holland a workshop employee may receive municipal allowances. In Norway a percentage addition is made to payments for blind-made goods. In America, some workshops grant augmentation of wages, and where this is not the case, the blind worker unable to earn a living wage may receive assistance in connection with a scheme of Aid to the Needy Blind.

Other Financial assistance.—This varies from one country to another but almost everywhere, though often from voluntary and private organisations whose resources are very limited, some help is available to meet special need. In Austria, help from Local Committees or Welfare offices for the blind is given to those who have no other means. In Germany, various Self-Help and Welfare Associations may assist. In Italy, the Italian Union of the Blind meets special requirements. In Eire, help is forthcoming from the National Council for the Blind or the National League of the Blind. The Association of the Blind in Sweden has its own Sickness and Burial Funds, and gives help in various ways in collaboration with other voluntary organisations. In Switzerland the Federation of the Swiss Blind and other organisations assist, so that "real need is rare among the blind"; the Swiss schemes include insurance against sickness at greatly reduced rates, holidays for blind workers and the purchase of guide-dogs. In Spain, through the National Association for the Blind there are available special grants in respect of marriage, maternity and death. In the United States, the war-blinded may receive financial assistance from the state in which they live, in addition to the Federal pension awarded as of right.

A few countries make no financial provision for the blind, and in these few, the blind, if destitute are obliged to apply for assistance because of their destitution and not because of their blindness, and may either be given outdoor relief, or be admitted into a Home for the Destitute.

Remission of Taxes.—In a number of countries, the blind are granted some remission of taxes. The following are among them:—

Austria.—Remission of income tax and wages tax up to S.3,000. Blind-made goods released under certain conditions from sale tax.

Denmark.—Remission of tax on part of "invalidity pension."

Finland.—Certain remission, dependent on disablement, supported by medical evidence.

France.—War-blinded allowed certain remission, and blind workers needing services of a guide may charge to "Business expenses."

Germany.—Exemption in certain cases from turnover-tax, wages tax and income tax, in view of the special expenses incidental to blindness.

Holland.—Exemption from capital levy, subject to a limit of income, and small allowance made on account of the special expenses incidental to blindness.

Hungary.—Remission of 75 per cent income tax to blind persons with small incomes.

United States of America.—Federal Income Tax Law allows a blind person income tax relief of 600 dollars, and several states having income tax laws in addition to Federal Income Tax Law are considering making similar concessions. In some states the war-blinded are exempted from real estate taxes on their homes, up to a certain limit.

Purchase of Blind-made Goods by Public Authorities.—Comparatively few countries report that there is preference given by the Government or any other public authority for blind-made goods.

In the United States, however, by the Wagner O'Day Act, the several units of the United States Government must purchase approved blind-made products at fair competitive prices determined by a Federal Committee. Comparable provisions have been established by law in several of the American states.

In Italy, the Government purchases at the prices obtaining in normal industry, 15 per cent of all goods manufactured by the blind, through the National Organisation of Labour for the Blind. In Holland the products of municipal workshops are purchased by the municipalities concerned. In Germany, where, until 1945 it was compulsory for certain public bodies (*e.g.*, railways, postal departments) to give 30 per cent of their orders to the blind, the revival of the regulation (now in abeyance) is under consideration.

In France, a decree is being considered whereby priority in State and administrative orders for brushes is to be given to the blind. In Denmark 100 blind workshop employees and 150 home workers are employed by a limited liability company aided by public subsidy, and the Government has recommended that hospitals, schools and other public institutions shall purchase goods made by this company. In Sweden, the Government "has created a business enterprise, charged both with providing blind craftsmen with raw materials, and with managing and organising the sale of the articles made by such craftsmen."

PART V.—CARE OF THE BLIND AT HOME

Services for the blind in their homes.—By far the greater number of blind persons are in the later age-groups. From the replies received, it appears that few countries are as acutely alive to the

needs of this large group as they are to the requirements of the younger blind.

A systematic home teaching and visiting service is sponsored by the local authorities in England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. It provides teaching of Braille reading and writing, teaching of Moon reading, instruction in a wide variety of pastime handicrafts, care of the deaf-blind, organisation of Social Centres and care in sickness.

A similar service exists in more than half of the American states, generally maintained at the expense of the state, but in a few instances under private auspices. In Eire, there is a limited home teaching service, provided by the National Council for the Blind, with some assistance from local authorities; the National League of the Blind also employs home visitors (not teachers) in the city of Dublin.

In Belgium, six trained workers are employed by La Ligue Braille; in Austria, the Federation for the Blind has a woman social worker; in Finland the blind are visited in Helsinki by three social workers paid for by voluntary agencies; in Germany the war-blinded and newly-blinded civilians are visited, but there is no home teaching; in Greece there is a certain amount of visiting in the interests of prevention of blindness or when cases of special need arise. In Poland, two home visitors have recently been appointed, one under the auspices of the United National Organisation, and the other financed by the Federation of Blind Workers; in Holland the Institutions keep in touch with the blind in their own area.

Help from voluntary workers.—Although the blind of most countries receive help from voluntary workers, such help is generally spontaneous and sporadic rather than part of an organised system.

The war-blinded in Finland are visited by a body of unpaid women helpers. The Association Valentin Haüy in France reports "some voluntary helpers, though recruitment is difficult." In parts of Germany local welfare associations make use of volunteers, and the task of some voluntary workers is to read aloud to the blind. "A Circle of Friends of the Blind" in Lodz (Poland) specially helps University students. In Eire, the Legion of Mary regularly visits the blind. In England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, the work of home teachers is greatly assisted by the voluntary efforts of those who supplement their visits to the more lonely blind, who help at Clubs and Social Centres, and who act as guides to these Centres, to church and to concerts and entertainments.

Voluntary transcribers.—The most highly organised form of voluntary service appears to be that of transcription of Braille, to which countless blind students and general readers in many countries are indebted. In England and Wales, the National Library for the Blind and the National Institute for the Blind, in Scotland the Royal School for the Blind, Edinburgh, owe much to the assistance of men and women who voluntarily transcribe general literature, music, scientific and mathematical textbooks, foreign languages, etc. A similar service exists in the United States :—“ a highly competent Braille transcribing service to assist blind College students by Brailling their special textbook requirements and to assist musicians by Brailling their music.”

Training of workers for the blind.—In Belgium, social science students intending to take up blind welfare may in the second or third year of their study take a course on matters relating to the blind.

Training courses for blind welfare workers in the United States are sponsored at several U.S. Universities by the American Foundation for the Blind ; other Universities and Colleges conduct special courses. Training and refresher courses for placement agents and other rehabilitation specialists are arranged by the Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Training courses of one year or less, and brief refresher courses for home teachers are arranged by Regional bodies in England and in Scotland, and a Training Course for welfare workers dealing with the disabled (including the blind) is now under consideration in Northern Ireland.

In England and Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Eire, home teachers of the blind (who may be blind or seeing persons) are generally required within two years of their appointment to take an examination conducted by the College of Teachers of the Blind, showing that they have a knowledge of embossed types, handicrafts, case-work and legislation affecting the blind.

PART VI.—HOMES FOR THE BLIND

Housing shortages and the aftermath of war are factors which in many countries have brought the need of Homes for the Aged into prominence during the past few years, but so far as the aged blind are concerned, it does not appear from the replies received to the questionnaire that the problem is one which has received special attention. The fact that many of the blind are cared for in Homes for the Aged or Homes for the Destitute rather than in Homes specifically for the blind may, however, have obscured the issue, as no statistics were asked for relating to blind persons in

such Homes, and it is doubtful if in any case it would have been possible to obtain them.

The following are the figures relating to number of Homes :—

Austria	7	Germany "Several"	Poland	8
Belgium	1	Greece	Scotland	3
Denmark	8	Holland	Spain	None
Eire	6	Hungary	Sweden	5
England & Wales	101	Italy "Several"	Switzerland ...	15
Finland	1	N. Ireland	U.S.A.	40
France "Several"		Norway		3

Some of the Homes are for men only, some for women only, others for both sexes. Most were founded by private organisations, and continue to be under private auspices, but in many cases they receive assistance from public funds. A few are reserved for those who need medical care. In Germany there is one Home for the deaf-blind, in England and in Denmark two such Homes, and many others in England where deaf-blind residents are accepted. Switzerland has two Homes for the feeble-minded blind, Denmark and Norway each have one, while in Germany several of the Homes for the Blind have a section devoted to the care of the blind who are feeble-minded.

PART VII.—RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BLIND

The acceptance of some public responsibility for the adult blind by the National Government and/or by local or by regional authorities, is recognised by practically all the countries whose representatives have replied to the questionnaire. There are some countries, however, where this acceptance is of recent date, and many where the amount of assistance in the form of either training, employment or financial aid, is extremely limited. In every country, there are private organisations (often of the blind themselves) doing what they can, with very limited resources.

Often when the National Government, or local or regional authorities intervene, private organisations are still entrusted with specific services, either local or national. In such cases, the National Government may accept the obligation of providing training and employment, and financial assistance in old age or infirmity. Regional authorities may undertake services too costly to be economically carried out by the smaller unit of the local authority. Local authorities may investigate cases of need, thus bringing to the care of the blind local knowledge, and sometimes also contributing financially. Private organisations may co-operate in the activities of all the public authorities (Government, regional and

local) in order to contribute to the work the experience they have gained from long personal contact with the blind ; where they act as the agents of a public body, they are usually financed by that body.

PART VIII.—LEGISLATION

On the whole, it is agreed that legislation had proved of inestimable value to the blind. In the words of the President of the Central Committee for Blind Workers in France, it has given the blind worker “une valeur économique.” Or again, to quote the reply to the questionnaire from the American Foundation for the Blind, it has given the blind “greater assurance of spiritual and cultural and economic well-being . . . has resulted in a great public acceptance of public responsibility for the adequate and dignified rehabilitation of the blind and in greater public recognition of their capacity to make their proper contribution to society.”

PART IX.—SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR THE BLIND

Transport.—Rail facilities, generally taking the form of allowing a blind person accompanied by a guide to travel for one fare instead of two, are very general, though in most cases the concession is limited to travel for business reasons. Countries making the concession of reduced rail travel include Austria, Belgium, England and Wales, France, Germany, Italy, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Spain and the U.S.A. In Finland, only persons travelling to meetings of the blind are entitled to concessions. In some countries, blind persons travel at reduced fares between their homes and Institutions for the blind. Bus and tram concessions (generally travel at one fare for two persons and sometimes free travel) are granted in many countries, especially where transport is municipally controlled. Shipping concessions are rare.

Literature.—The questionnaire has revealed the paucity of literature for the blind, especially in countries involved in the war. In many instances, but for the devoted labour of voluntary transcribers, the blind would be gravely handicapped in study and have little opportunity for general reading. Braille printing presses are often either lacking altogether, or obsolete.

Apparatus.—In the majority of countries this has to be imported, and paid for by the blind purchaser himself, in some cases with the help of private organisations. In most countries, even though there is no general remission of duty on imported apparatus, individual concessions are made on application, e.g., in Finland, Germany, Greece, Poland and Switzerland. In Italy educational apparatus when a gift is imported free, in Eire when apparatus (including

radio sets) is imported by an approved organisation for the blind, no duty is charged.

Talking Books.—The Talking Book exists only in the United States and Britain, where it is still regarded as being in an experimental state.

Radio.—Arrangements for the distribution of radio sets to the blind, either free or at reduced rates, exist in the following countries : Belgium, Denmark, Eire, England and Wales, Finland, Germany, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.S.A.

In Belgium, help is given by charitable societies as funds allow. In Denmark, the Dansk Blindesamfund distribute fifty sets annually, mostly free. In Eire, two private organisations have distributed many hundreds of sets to the needy blind. In Finland, "Blind organisations assist as far as funds allow." In Germany, the war-blinded and those blinded by accident receive sets ; in Norway, "the Blind Organisation looks upon it as a very important task to provide the blind generally with a good radio set," the needy receiving one as a loan without payment, and others obtaining one either at reduced cost, or at cost price. In Switzerland, the blind and other disabled persons who are necessitous are provided with sets free or at very reduced cost and between 400 and 500 blind have benefited. In Sweden, "there is co-operation between the different organisations to provide sets free or at reduced cost." In Britain the British Wireless for the Blind Fund aims at providing free sets to all the necessitous blind. In America, the American Foundation for the Blind distributes sets free or at reduced rate on a nation-wide basis.

Free radio receiving licenses are issued in Belgium, Eire, England and Wales, Finland, France, Algeria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Sweden and in some parts of Germany ; in other parts of Germany, and in Denmark and Norway such licences are granted to those with small incomes. In the United States no licences are required by any listener, whether blind or seeing.

SECTION II.

In the summaries that follow, brief details are given of services to the blind in each of the countries represented at the Conference. They are taken from the replies to the questionnaire, and the Roman numerals refer to the headings in that questionnaire :—

- I. ASCERTAINMENT.
- II. REHABILITATION AND TRAINING.
- III. EMPLOYMENT.
- IV. ECONOMIC PROVISION.
- V. CARE OF THE BLIND AT HOME.
- VI. HOMES FOR THE BLIND.
- VII. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BLIND.
- VIII. LEGISLATION FOR THE BLIND.
- IX. SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR THE BLIND.

AUSTRIA

I.

Definition of Blindness. Children with vision 1/60 accepted for admission to Institution for the Blind, Vienna. Adults are blind who have 1/25 normal vision, or vision economically worthless. (Basis of statutes of Federation for the Blind).

Number of Blind : Approximately 4,000 (66 per 100,000). Figure based on membership of Federation, information from Blinded Veterans Federation, and estimate of numbers of aged blind.

II.

Only limited training possible (owing to destruction of buildings) in baskets, brushes ; occasionally typing or telephony. Cost met by Welfare Unions of administrative district, insurance in cases of Industrial Injury, and occasionally by Federation for the Blind.

III.

Approximate numbers of blind persons employed :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	92
Manual or other at home	...	...	...	...	13
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	128
Factories	...	...	...	...	47
Professional and Clerical	...	...	...	...	117
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	9
Other occupations	...	...	...	...	206

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Brushes, baskets and mats.

Home : Knitting, netting, weaving, chair-caning, etc.

Factory operations : Wrapping, sorting, radio assembling, etc.

Careers of professional blind include music, massage, teaching.

IV.

War-blinded receive pensions, and civilian blinded if previously employed may receive small Insurance disablement benefit ; if not, and without resources may receive small financial help from local Welfare Offices. Federation, from voluntary funds, allows destitute members maximum of S.70 per month, so far as funds allow. Totally destitute blind may be admitted to Homes, through Welfare Offices.

Remission of income tax and wages tax up to S.3,000, and some remission of sale tax.

Wages in special workshops for the blind 20 per cent higher than normal piece rates "to balance decreased capacity . . . as to quantity."

V.

No home teaching or visiting, except in so far as Federation employs one woman social worker. Federation gives free Braille lessons.

VI.

Seven Homes (six for both sexes, one for women only). Two financed by Federal States, others privately.

VII.

Responsibility is shared by Welfare Associations, which maintain Homes, and Federation for the Blind. Maintenance in Homes paid generally by Welfare organisations which are private bodies.

VIII.

Law enforcing employment of percentage of the disabled benefits the war-blinded. No other special legislation.

IX.

Transport. Reduced rail fares for business travel, some tramway facilities.

Literature. Braille Printing Press (Vienna) obsolete, but modern press about to be established. No library facilities.

Apparatus. Only Braille slates. No remission of Customs on imported apparatus.

Radio. No radio at reduced rates. Free radio licences.

Other facilities. Extra food, cigarette and soap rations allowed the blind. Reduced theatre tickets.

BELGIUM

I.

No recognised definition of blindness.

Number of blind persons: 3,684 (43 per 100,000).

Figures supplied by National Statistical Office, and are "sujets à caution."

II.

Legislation of June, 1937, relating to the disabled (including the blind) designed to promote training. Centres at Bruges and Ghlin lez Mons; maintenance a public charge. Workshops in larger towns give training in making baskets, brushes, etc.

Effort made to place blind adults in trades for which they have some aptitude.

III.

No complete statistics of workers exist. Following are approximate :

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	120
Manual and other occupations at home...	...	...	...	...	500
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	20
Factories	...	...	...	...	30
Clerical work (telephonists)	...	...	...	...	10
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	6
Professions	...	...	...	...	Not known

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Baskets, brushes, chair-seats, wood-chopping.

Home : Mainly knitting.

Factory operations : Packing and sorting.

Careers of professional blind include music, piano-tuning, teaching, massage.

IV.

Under the legislation of June, 1937 (as amended in December, 1946), percentage grant is made in relation to blind person's degree of incapacity, *e.g.* :—

				francs	%
80-100 per cent incapacity	...	...	...	140	
60-75 per cent incapacity	...	...	...	120	

Blind workers benefit in same degree as seeing from Social Security law of December, 1944.

Blind workers in special workshops paid time rate approved by National Labour Convention for seeing workers in same categories.

V.

No systematic home teaching service. La Ligue Braille employs six trained social workers. Some blind persons give private teaching in Braille and crafts.

Training of workers for blind welfare. Social Study courses include period of work in an office for blind welfare, for students wishing to take up blind work.

VI.

One Home only, under private management, but with municipal assistance. Both sexes accepted. Hostel for women workers at Antwerp. Aged blind and blind with other handicaps accepted in Institutions for Aged and Infirm.

VII.

Allocation of funds for disabled under law of June, 1937, at State charge. Training of necessitous adults provided for as follows :—State 5/8, Province 1/8, Relief funds 2/8.

Voluntary organisations work independently of public authorities, but provision is made for help to voluntary organisations by provincial and municipal funds in the area.

VIII.

Blind, like other handicapped and necessitous people, benefit by law of June, 1937, as stated above. Legislation administered by Minister of Labour and Social Insurance. Cost for blind persons in Homes borne under law regulating public funds, and administered by Ministry of Health.

IX.

Transport. Reduced rail fares when travelling on business, free transport of guide-dogs, some tramway concessions.

Literature. National Braille Press receives public subsidy.

Apparatus. No apparatus produced. No remission of Customs duty on imports.

Radio. Some societies supply free radio sets, or sets at a reduced cost.

Free radio licenses.

BULGARIA

I

Definition of Blindness. Children. Those unable to benefit by education in schools for the seeing.

Adults. Those having visual acuity less than one-tenth.

Certification of blindness must be by two Government ophthalmologists.

Number of blind: Census figures of 1945 give 4,000 (57 per 100,000).

II

Education of blind children is nominally compulsory, but the law is not adequately enforced. There are two schools for the blind and one training centre for adults. A summer school lasting two months is arranged annually for the teaching of Braille to adults. Rehabilitation and training of adults undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Assistance.

The blind capable of profiting by it, may follow University courses, or may attend the National Academy of Music or the Teachers' Training College.

III.

Employment :

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	16
Home workers	...	...	...	...	18
Factories	...	...	...	...	1
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	238
Professions	...	...	...	...	72

Articles produced :—

Special workshops: Baskets, bottle covers, hampers, brooms, knitted goods.

Home workers: Baskets, knitted goods, Braille transcription, woven goods.

IV.

The war-blinded and those blinded in industry receive pensions. Assistance is given to other blind persons from public funds at the rate of 1,000 levas per month.

Blind workers benefit in the same way as the seeing from Social Insurance.

Other financial help is given by the Association of the Blind of Bulgaria to its members in certain circumstances. There is also a fund for the aged, providing blind men at 65 and blind women at 60 with a monthly grant of 1,000 levas. A grant of 5,000 levas is given to the heirs of a member at death.

V.

No systematic home visiting.

VI.

Two Homes for the Blind, one for men (temporarily closed but to be re-opened as soon as possible), providing lodging only, and one for women, providing board-lodging and some training and employment in domestic work.

The blind may be received in other Homes for the Aged.

VII.

Responsibility for the Blind is shared between the Ministry of Labour and of Social Assistance, and the Association of the Blind of Bulgaria.

VIII.

Transport. 65 per cent reduction is given on railways to blind travellers and guide travels free. On trams and buses both blind person and guide travel free.

Literature No Braille press. Hand transcription only. One library of 1,000 volumes (200 titles).

No manufacture of apparatus except writing-frames.
Remission of tax on apparatus imported for the use of blind persons in Institutions.

Free wireless licences. No provision of sets either free or at reduced cost.

CANADA

I.

Definition of blindness. 6/60 in the better eye after correction subject to higher visual acuity allowance where field is limited or eccentric and limited to an angle not exceeding ten degrees. Definition is applied to both adults and children, by Department of National Health and Welfare (for pensions purposes) and by Canadian National Institute for the Blind, for registration.

Number of blind : Estimated at approximately 18,200 (150 per 100,000). Of these, 16,688 are registered by Canadian N.I.B.

II.

Rehabilitation, training and after-care of the war-blinded is provided by Canadian N.I.B. on behalf of National Department of Veterans Affairs.

Early rehabilitation of civilians provided in their own homes by home teachers employed by Canadian N.I.B. Suitable selected cases provided with training, leading to placement in industry.

III.

Employment :

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	514
Home workers	...	...	...	...	2,042
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	150
Factories	...	...	...	...	365
Clerical	...	...	...	...	25
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	50
Professions	...	...	...	...	300
Other occupations	...	...	...	...	424
					<hr/> 3,870 <hr/>

Articles produced :

Special workshops: Brooms, brushes, mops, mattresses, rubber mats, basketry, aprons, smocks, etc.

At home: Knitting, weaving, hand and machine sewing, basketry.

N.B.—Canadian N.I.B. has occupational centres, where some sub-contract factory assembly work is carried out under supervision.

Careers adopted by the professional blind include: Music, physiotherapy, law, home teaching, placement agencies.

IV.

State allowances are made to the blind, towards which the Dominion Government contributes 75 per cent, and Provincial Governments 25 per cent; a provincial bonus is also given in some provinces.

Blind persons are granted 500 dollars remission of Dominion income tax.

Blind workers in sheltered workshops normally receive augmentation of wages through Canadian N.I.B., and State allowances for the blind may be supplemented to permissible limits in cases of need.

Emergency assistance provided by C.N.I.B. in sickness, etc.

No Government or public authority arrangement for purchase of blind-made goods.

V.

Systematic home visiting and teaching by forty trained home teachers employed by C.N.I.B. Help given in sale of handicrafts.

C.N.I.B. Women's Auxiliaries in large centres and C.N.I.B. Local Boards in smaller centres give voluntary service.

Training of workers for the blind. Placement officers, secretaries and home teachers given training by C.N.I.B. in co-operation with Universities.

VI.

C.N.I.B. has 10 Homes for the Blind, mainly for the aged. Six new Homes now under construction. One Home in Montreal operated by M.A.B.

No special Homes for persons with multiple defects, but deaf-blind accepted in Homes for the Blind.

VII.

Limited assistance is given to the blind from public funds (Dominion, Provincial and Municipal).

Canadian National Institute for the Blind serves the whole of Canada supplemented by two private organisations in Montreal city.

VIII.

Effect of legislation has been to stimulate a sense of responsibility with central and local Governments, and also to arouse interest in the general public.

The Government Departments responsible are :—

For the war-blinded veterans : National Department of Veterans' Affairs.

For civilians : Department of National Health and Welfare, Provincial Departments of Education, Health and Welfare.

IX.

Transport : Free pass or one fare for two on street railways, and one fare for two on trains and buses. On North Atlantic Passenger Service blind person with guide charged one and a half fares for the two persons.

Literature : Books and periodicals mainly purchased from Britain, U.S. and France. C.N.I.B. publishes one Braille periodical and some text-books. Embossed literature circulated through C.N.I.B. central and branch libraries.

Apparatus imported at actual or subsidised cost by C.N.I.B. Customs duty on imported apparatus remitted, subject to use and not for re-sale.

Talking Book machines purchased from Britain, U.S. and private industry in Canada, and distributed at cost, or in special cases on loan.

Radio. Free licences. Sets provided at reduced cost or free through C.N.I.B.

DENMARK

I.

Definition of Blindness. Children who are unable to benefit by education at schools for the seeing. (Definition accepted by Ministry of Social Affairs).

Adults with visual power not more than $\frac{4}{60}$, or, if greater, having other vision of no practical value, are blind. (Definition for blind person wishing to benefit from membership of the Dansk Blindesamfund).

Number of blind :—4,000 (100 per 100,000). Figure includes members of Dansk Blindesamfund, with estimated numbers of children and aged blind.

Manual training provided at Institute for the Blind, with assistance for lodging, etc., from public funds. Factory training through apprenticeships. Number of blind persons trained in music, organists generally completing this training at Royal Academy of Music. A few masseurs and telephonists also trained.

III.

Employed persons estimated at about 600, together with "some hundreds occupied at home."

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	140
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	300
Factories	...	...	...	...	18
Professional and clerical...	...	...	...	...	77
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	4
Various	...	...	...	...	60

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Baskets, brushes, mats, textiles, knitted goods and (in factory run by Dansk Blindesamfund), locks.

At home : As above, except for locks.

Factory operations : Machine operating, drilling, welding.

Professions followed by the blind include : Music, journalism, law, etc.

IV.

All blind persons whose earnings are one-third or less than those of the seeing receive "invalidity pension," with special handicap allowance to meet special expenses due to blindness.

The blind worker benefits by Social Security legislation on the same terms as the seeing.

In case of special emergency or need, blind may have help through private organisations, the most important being Dansk Blindesamfund.

Taxes are paid as usual, except on that additional part of their "invalidity pension" which takes the form of handicap allowance.

No augmentation of wages, but blind unable to earn a living wage (a) receive invalidity pension, and (b) can apply for special help in emergencies as mentioned above.

Government recommends public institutions to purchase blind-made goods from a limited liability company, publicly subsidised, employing 100 blind workers and 150 home workers. Grants of tools made to blind worker.

V.

No home teaching service. Teacher from Royal Institute for the Blind may occasionally teach Braille in the home of a blind person, paid by public funds. Some domestic science teaching given to blind housewives.

Organised voluntary help given by Braille copyists for library.

VI.

Eight Homes (3 being for women). One holiday Home, run by Dansk Blindesamfund. Three Homes reserved for aged. Homes generally founded by private philanthropy.

Three special Homes: One for deaf-blind women, one for deaf-blind men, one for feeble-minded men.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is shared by Government, Local Authorities and Private Organisations:—

Government awards "invalidity pension," through the department (Invalidforsikringsretten) which deals with all economic problems of the disabled.

Municipalities assess means of the blind, and regulate amount of "invalidity pension" accordingly, paying it on behalf of Central authority but recovering greater part in form of subsidies.

Private organisations:—Dansk Blindesamfund, receiving public subsidies and performing important services for the blind; and three other private organisations, without assistance from public funds.

VIII.

Fear of reduction of "invalidity pension" tends to reduce the initiative of the blind worker.

Legislation administered by Ministry of Social Affairs.

IX.

Transport. Travelling facilities allowed for blind persons travelling with guide on business. Tramway facilities in two cities.

Literature. Two printing-houses: State Printing Office for the Blind and Printing Office of Dansk Blindesamfund. Blind individual buys books at very low cost, and receives books and music free on loan.

Apparatus manufactured partly by State and partly by Dansk Blindesamfund and sold to blind at cost price. Very little apparatus imported.

Radio. Each year 50 radio sets distributed by Dansk Blindesamfund free or at reduced cost, to necessitous.

Radio licences free to persons of limited means.

EIRE

I.

Definition of Blindness:—No special definition for children. (Education of blind children not yet compulsory).

Adults are blind who are "so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential, *or* unable to follow their ordinary occupation." Definition laid down by Department of Social Welfare and used by Local Authorities.

Number of blind:—Estimate, 7,000 (233 per 100,000).

Figure based on Census of 1911, returns from Local Government Department and other sources, but cannot be regarded as reliable.

II.

No early rehabilitation, except through visits of home teachers. Training in manual occupations may be provided by Local Authorities, but arrangements by no means universal or satisfactory. Occasional clerical training arranged outside Eire with grants from State and Local Authority.

III.

No statistics of employment available. Following are approximate only :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	85
Working at home	...	...	...	...	15
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	45
Factories ...	...	...	...	...	—
Clerical and professional	...	...	...	...	12

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Baskets, brushes, mats, mattresses, knitted goods.

Home-workers : Baskets, mats, hand-knitting, chair-seating.

Professions followed by the blind include : Music (teaching and organ-playing), home teaching.

IV.

Under recent Social Welfare Act, blind persons over 21 receive State pension of 17/6 per week, subject to means test. Earnings up to certain amount disregarded.

Domiciliary assistance given through Local Authorities.

Social Security. Blind workers receive benefits of National Health and Unemployment Insurance in same way as the seeing.

Augmentation of Wages. *Per capita* grants are paid in the two Industrial Institutions from State and Local Authorities (£40 from State and £40 from Local Authorities) for augmentation of wages, irrespective of earnings. Institutions concerned have recently adopted wage scheme, giving minimum of £4 10s. 8d. per week, which can be exceeded by industry and ability. Incentive bonus paid.

Other financial assistance. National League of the Blind give help to 500 members in case of sickness, unemployment or other need, and National Council for the Blind also gives help in necessitous cases.

V.

National Council for the Blind of Ireland employs seventeen home teachers of the blind, and covers a limited part of the country. National League of the Blind visit in Dublin and Cork.

Voluntary workers from the Legion of Mary assist in visiting the blind and the National Council for the Blind has much help from voluntary workers in all parts of the country.

Training. The National Council for the Blind gives certain training to home teachers.

VI.

Six Homes for the Blind, mainly for the aged ; four are for women, one for men, one for both sexes. Financed by voluntary contributions, by public funds (in four cases) and by residents' payments.

No Special Homes for those suffering from other defects.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is shared by Government, Local Authorities and Private Organisations :—

Government : Blind Pensions.

Local Authorities : Domiciliary Assistance, grants for residents in institutions, etc.

Private Organisations : General assistance in need.

VIII.

Legislation provides reasonable standard of security for the industrial blind, but is inadequate in provision for the necessitous, and for those needing technical or professional training.

Legislation relating to training and employment administered by Department of Social Welfare under Blind Persons Acts 1920–1934, and Social Welfare Act 1948.

IX.

No transport facilities.

No Braille publishing houses. Embossed books are imported.

Embossed books may be borrowed free of charge from National Library for the Blind, London.

Apparatus purchased from National Institute for the Blind, London. Customs duty on articles for the use of a blind person (including radio sets) if imported by an approved organisation for the blind, remitted.

Radio. National Council for the Blind, and the National League of the Blind supply radio sets to the necessitous blind. Free radio licences are issued to persons in receipt of blind pension, or allowances in the form of domiciliary assistance, and to those who are resident in an Institution for the Blind.

ENGLAND AND WALES

I.

Definition of Blindness :—Children. Those who have no sight, or whose sight is, or is likely to become, so defective that they require education by methods not involving the use of sight (Education Act 1944).

Adults. So blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential. (National Assistance Act 1948).

Persons with over 6/60 (Snellen) not blind, and with less than 3/60 (Snellen) blind. With vision between 3/60 and 6/60, they may be classified as blind or not blind, according to fullness or restriction of the field of vision.

For admission to Register of blind persons, certificate of an ophthalmic surgeon normally required.

Number of blind. 76,009 (175 per 100,000). Figure obtained from Register at March 31st, 1948.

II.

Rehabilitation and training provided for the war-blinded through St. Dunstan's Organisation for Men and Women Blinded on War Service. St. Dunstan's continues to care for this section of the blind throughout their lives.

Rehabilitation for civilians provided by National Institute for the Blind.

Training of civilians under 21 the responsibility of Ministry of Education ; over 21 provided by Ministry of Labour.

Training in manual occupations is given in a number of centres throughout the country.

Training in shorthand-typing given at Royal Normal College for the Blind, and National Institute's School of Shorthand and Telephony, Bridgnorth. Training in Physiotherapy at National Institute's School of Physiotherapy. Centre for basic industrial training for those entering factories recently opened by Ministry of Labour.

III.

Employment :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	3,300
Home workers	...	...	...	...	1,500
Clerical	...	...	...	...	800
Factories	...	...	...	...	2,000
Professional	...	...	...	...	400
Other occupations*	...	...	...	...	900
					<hr/>
					8,900
					<hr/>

* "Other occupations" include commercial representatives and those in business on own account.

Articles produced :—

Special Workshops : Baskets, bedding, brushes, mats, machine knitted goods, etc.

At home : Baskets, chair-caning, round machine knitting, hand-knitting, etc.

Factory operations include : Assembling, precision inspecting, capstan lathe operating, packing, sorting, etc.

Careers adopted by the professional blind include : Law, ministry of religion, physiotherapy, teaching, administration, music.

IV.

Pensions and allowances. Pensions (maximum 26/- p.w.), payable to the blind at 40, subject to means. National Assistance grants are also payable, on a scale higher than that received by the seeing.

Social Security. Insured blind persons receive same benefits as the seeing under National Insurance Act 1946.

Augmentation of wages is paid to workshop employees and home workers. Other financial assistance is payable from voluntary sources, and includes pensions, assistance in sickness or emergency, equipment for professional or business careers, etc.

V.

Blind persons are visited in their homes by qualified home teachers of the blind, employed by the Local Authority or voluntary agency acting on its behalf. They ascertain the needs of the blind, give lessons in reading and writing embossed type and instruction in pastime handicrafts, organise Social Centres, etc.

Voluntary workers supplement the work of paid officials throughout the country. Perhaps the most highly organised help given is that of voluntary Braille transcribers.

Training courses of one year or less are arranged for home teachers of the blind, in preparation for the home teachers' examination, conducted by the College of Teachers of the Blind. Refresher courses are also arranged.

VI.

There are 101 Homes for the Blind (7 for men, 27 for women, 67 for both sexes). Two are reserved for the deaf-blind, but several other Homes accept deaf-blind persons.

Most Homes are for the aged, and some accept blind persons needing special medical care. Several take holiday guests.

VII.

Responsibility for the welfare of the blind is shared between Government, Local Authorities and Private Organisations.

(a) Government : Ministry of Health exercises general supervision over Local Authorities in relation to the blind. Pensions and National Assistance payable from Government funds.

(b) Local Authorities : County Councils and County Borough Councils are responsible, under the National Assistance Act 1948, for a number of services, including provision of workshops and hostels, suitable work, assistance in marketing goods, and home teaching.

(c) Private Organisations : These include :—

St. Dunstan's Organisation. For the care of those blinded on active service.

National Institute for the Blind. Provides many services on a national basis, including production of books, magazines, newspapers and music in embossed types, training in physiotherapy, telephony, shorthand-typing, provision of rehabilitation centres, Homes and hostels, Talking Book service, etc.

Regional Associations for the Blind. Four regional Associations, representative of Local Authorities and Voluntary Agencies, exist to further the work of such bodies in relation to blind welfare by collating statistics, organising Conferences, conducting Training and Refresher Courses for home teachers, and supplying information and advice.

College of Teachers of the Blind. A professional organisation for raising the status and qualifications of school, home and craft teachers.

National Association of Workshops for the Blind. To promote co-operation among workshops, employment research and increased workshop efficiency.

National Library for the Blind. A nation-wide service, supplying books on loan to blind readers.

There are also two important organisations of blind persons, the National Federation of the Blind and the National League of the Blind, both of which aim at securing suitable professional or industrial employment for blind persons, and furthering their general welfare.

In addition to those private organisations which provide national or regional services, there are throughout the country, a number of private organisations, or voluntary agencies, whose object it is to care for the general welfare of the blind within a limited geographical area. They may be employed as agents of the Local Authorities to carry out duties imposed on those Authorities by the National Assistance Act, and may also perform other useful services, not provided under statutory obligation.

VIII.

The effect of legislation has been to secure training and employment for the younger blind, to remove from blind persons the fear of destitution, and to provide general welfare services of wide scope for all. The Government Departments through which legislation is operated include: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and National Service, Ministry of National Insurance, National Assistance Board, Post Office.

IX.

Transport. A blind person and guide may travel for business purposes on British railways for one fare. A similar concession is made on many tramway and omnibus services.

Literature. Books and periodicals in embossed types published by the National Institute for the Blind, and sold at a fraction of the cost of production.

Apparatus. Manufactured by the National Institute for the Blind and sold at less than cost.

Production of literature and apparatus financed by voluntary funds, public grants and purchasers' payments.

Talking Books are manufactured and distributed by the National Institute for the Blind, working in co-operation with St. Dunstan's. Free radio sets are provided for the necessitous blind through the British Wireless for the Blind Fund. Free radio licences issued.

FINLAND

I.

Definition of Blindness: Children unable to read print are received in schools for the blind.

Adults are blind who cannot find their way in unfamiliar surroundings. Medical evidence of blindness required before "Blind assistance" is given.

Number of Blind : 3,000 (75 per 100,000). Estimate based on Social Statistics (1934) and on number of war-blinded and those in receipt of " Blind Assistance " from State Funds.

II.

Manual training of 3-5 years given to adults at the cost of the State under law of January, 1947. Massage also taught. Outfit of tools at end of training.

III.

Persons employed :—						approx :
Special workshops	...	...	„	...	150	
Working at home	...	...	„	...	1,400	
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	15	
Factories	...	...	...	...	10	
Clerical	...	...	...	...	—
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	3	
Professional	...	...	...	...	10	

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Baskets, brushes.

Home : Baskets, brushes, needlework.

Factory occupations : Packing, spool-winding, etc.

Professions followed include teaching, business administration.

IV.

The war-blinded receive State pensions. The civilian blind over 16 receive " Blind Assistance " amounting to 3,500 Finnish marks monthly (subject to means and certain other restrictions) as handicap allowance, to " compensate " for blind worker's slower rate of work. At present time about 1,600 blind in receipt of this. In addition, since the beginning of 1949, the State has given a certain sum to the Central Union of the Blind, to reduce cost of raw materials used by the blind. Income Tax relief is given, provided disablement is proved by medical evidence.

No other special assistance except what may be given from limited funds of organisations of the blind.

V.

Three social workers, employed by private organisations, visit and help the blind in Helsinki. War-blinded are visited by voluntary workers.

No home teaching system. No training of welfare workers for the blind.

VI.

One only, chiefly used as hostel for women workers. Founded and maintained by Friends of the Blind Association. No Homes for blind persons with other handicaps. Two Summer Holiday Homes.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is shared by Government, Municipal Authorities and private organisations.

Government: Trains adults and supplies equipment at close of training. Responsible for "Blind Assistance" mentioned under IV. Supplies equipment needed at end of training.

Municipal authorities: Act in advisory capacity, watching circumstances of the blind, and reporting on financial need to State. No other help, except that of provision for the destitute in Institutions belonging to the municipality concerned.

Private organisations: Provide raw materials for blind workers and market goods made. Central Union of the Blind chiefly concerned in this.

Interests of blind masseurs watched over by own Association of Blind Masseurs.

Private and voluntary organisations work for the blind independently of the authorities, except that they may receive financial assistance from State funds.

VIII.

"Blind Assistance" mentioned under Part IV considerable improvement on anything obtained before present year, but still inadequate. It includes free medical treatment, so long as there is hope of saving sight. War-blinded provided for more generously than civilians.

Legislation for the blind administered through Ministry of Social Affairs.

IX.

Transport. No rail facilities for adults, except when attending meetings of blind organisations. Tram and bus facilities in Helsinki.

Literature. One Braille Library receives small State subsidy. Most books hand-transcribed, and much work done voluntarily. One Braille periodical, printed with some State assistance.

Apparatus. None manufactured until recently, but now owing to difficulties resultant on war, necessary to manufacture some Braille writing frames and machines; plans, however, in process for

importing again. Books and apparatus for school use purchased by the State, but otherwise blind purchase their own.

Customs duty not charged if application is made for remission of duty on imported apparatus.

Radio. Assistance given by Organisations for the Blind in purchase of sets for necessitous. Free radio licences.

FRANCE

I.

Definition of blindness :—Adults : Those with no central vision, or vision less than $1/20$ normal.

Children : As above, but education in school for the blind may be arranged even if sight at the time exceeds $1/20$, if prognosis is bad. Definition required by Ministry of Health, as condition of receiving assistance under Ordinance of July, 1945, in order (a) to promote prevention of blindness, and (b) to ensure that only the blind benefit by the legislation in their favour.

Declaration is compulsory as condition of receiving help, except for war-blinded, those blinded by industrial accident, and those entitled to disablement allowance under Social Security law of October, 1945.

Persons with central vision less than $1/10$ normal are issued with a "carte d'invalidité canne blanche" for safety reasons, but are not entitled to financial benefits of the certificated blind.

Number of Blind : The Census returns of 1946 show a blind population of 42,663 (102 per 100,000). The legislation of 1945, making evidence of blindness necessary, has made more accurate enumeration possible.

II.

Legislation of 1945 envisages setting up of Rehabilitation Centres, approved by Ministry of Health.

Training is arranged for :—

(1) War-blinded (military and civil) : Through L'Office National des Mutilés, etc.

(2) Those blinded by industrial accident or disease, or suffering from blindness incurred during employment : Through La Sécurité Sociale (Legislation of December, 1946 and June, 1947).

(3) Others : Through La Protection Sociale des Aveugles (July, 1945).

Training generally residential, and at cost of public funds, as indicated above. Dependents should be cared for and family anxieties minimised to encourage trainee to take fullest advantage of facilities offered.

Up to the present provision of equipment at end of training has been left to private benevolence, but desirable that this should be regarded as a public responsibility.

No special training for factory work ; importance recognised of blind persons returning to former occupation whenever feasible.

Facilities offered at Association Valentin Haüy for early training of telephonists.

Four centres for training in physiotherapy in preparation for State diploma.

III.

Workshops. Limited number of workshops—most important being in Paris suburb of St. Mandé, under auspices of Prefecture of the Seine department. (Director of Central Committee of Blind Workers estimates from membership figures that there are in France about 900 workshop employees, 600 employees in co-operatives, institutions or industrial enterprises).

Home workers. No definite statistics, and estimates vary from 2,500–3,000. Home-workers include a number who have retired from regular employment, but work to supplement any assistance they may have from public sources. They include also small traders. Several home workers practice more than one craft, and may not be highly proficient in any. Position of the home-worker one which needs considerable improvement.

Working on own account. No estimate possible.

Factories. Number small, but no figures available.

Clerical. Probably about fifteen telephonists and same number of typists.

Commercial representatives. Association Valentin Haüy considers probably few, but Director of Central Committee of Blind Workers suggests 350. (Difference probably due to difficulty of ascertaining exact meaning of term).

Professions. No estimate (Director of Central Committee states that there are 300 masseurs and 600 musicians working as teachers and artists, but would limit other professions to about thirty).

Articles produced. Workshops and home : Baskets, brushes, knitting, chair-seating, piano-tuning.

Factory processes : Cardboard box making, work in photography and motor industries.

Professions followed by the blind include Law, Teaching, Massage, etc.

IV.

Three categories of blind persons :—

(1) War-blinded (including civilians) blinded by enemy action. Pensions, under legislation of March and June 1919.

(2) Those entitled to pensions or allowances under Social Security legislation :—

(a) As suffering from industrial accident or disease.

(b) Those not so suffering who, as insured persons, draw disablement pension, which merges into Old Age Pension at 60. Those who have no other resources may obtain supplementary grant under law of July, 1905, relating to assistance of the aged and infirm.

Both classes entitled to medical treatment and medicines and to hospital treatment. Maternity benefit and family allowances also available.

(3) Those not entitled to war pensions or insurance benefits may receive help under the legislation of July, 1905, with augmentation in cases of those needing attendance. Maximum allowance of 4,700 francs monthly insufficient. Legislation is obsolete, and the Government is now considering possibility of improving it.

Tax remission. Only war-blinded benefit ; those whose income is such that they are not required to pay income-tax are also exempted under certain conditions from land tax, and from tax on personal property. (Civilians who have to pay certain costs incidental to blindness, *e.g.*, guide to business, may claim relief).

Blind do not receive augmentation of wages but under law of July, 1945, an allowance payable to "compensate" for handicap.

V.

No system of organised home visiting.

Association Valentin Haüy acts as centre of information and advice for social workers, and studies social problems relating specially to the blind.

Some voluntary visitors, but recruitment difficult.

VI.

"Several" Homes. Cost of residence met by the blind themselves, or—if they are necessitous—out of public funds. Some Homes for Blind take both sexes.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is shared by National Government, Regional and Local Authorities. Expenses of general assistance divided annually in each Department, between State, Departments and Communes. (Percentage required from communes calculated on general population, not on number assisted). Private organisations confine their activities, by reason of their limited resources, to acting in advisory capacity and indicating to the blind the sources from which they may obtain public help (e.g., Association Valentin Haüy publishes booklet *Social Assistance for the Blind in France* for guidance of social workers).

Private organisations work independently, except in matters relating to education, training and hospitalisation. In other connections, State aid limited to grant from Ministry of Health of 300,000 fr. per annum.

VIII.

Effect of legislation :—

- (1) To make education and training possible for younger blind.
- (2) To do something "to compensate" the worker for handicap of blindness.
- (3) To help the blind unable to work to live at home or to benefit by hospitalisation.

A Consultative Committee has been set up under the legislation of July, 1945, to advise the Minister of Health on all matters relating to the blind.

Legislation is administered by Ministry of Health.

IX.

Transport. Railway facilities enable blind man and guide to travel for one fare for the two persons. (In some areas blind man travels at half-fare and guide free). There are tram and bus facilities also in many towns.

Literature. Dependent for printing and distribution on private organisations, without Government aid. Cost met by blind person's payments and private donations.

Apparatus. As above. Considerable help given by American Foundation for the Overseas Blind.

No legal remission of customs duty on imported apparatus, but remission sometimes granted in individual cases.

Radio. No arrangements for supply of sets. Free radio licences.

ALGERIA

(Algeria is given here, as in many respects it may be treated as if a Department of France).

I.

Definition of blindness : As in France.

The only right conferred by Algerian *carte d'invalidité* is that of carrying a white stick.

Number of blind. In statement published by French Ministry of Information (1946) given as 17,900, but Government estimates at about 25,000.

II.

Federation des Aveugles de l'Afrique du Nord arranges apprenticeship if possible at its own workshops. Some others train at Municipal Institute for the Blind, Algiers.

Grants sometimes given in specific cases for training in France, paid by public funds.

No professional training, unless grant made for training in France. One telephonist has been trained in Algiers.

III.

Only approximate figures of employment possible :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	75
At home	...	...	...	...	50
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	2
Clerical	...	...	...	...	1
Commercial representative	...	...	...	...	1
Professions	...	...	...	...	20

In addition to the above, there are sellers of lottery tickets, water-carriers, hawkers, etc.

Articles produced : Brushes, chair-caning.

Federation has experimented with iron-work (making garden furniture, etc.), but not economic.

IV.

Only war-blinded or those blinded by industrial accident eligible for pensions. French law of 1945 has not yet been extended to Algerian blind, but Federation is working with this in view.

No Social Security law in Northern Africa for blind or for seeing persons.

Blind in some Communes may, if destitute, benefit in same way as other destitute and aged persons, by relief ranging to maximum of 240 francs monthly. Elsewhere, in larger towns, Benevolent Organisations (some under European, and some under Moslem auspices), may grant relief from 300-1,200 francs monthly. Grants to European blind generally more generous than those granted by the Moslem organisations.

Purchase of blind-made goods. The Administration recommends public authorities to buy blind-made goods of equal quality and price to those offered from other sources, but there is no legislative provision.

V.

No organised help for blind at home. Members of the Federation visit and teach Braille voluntarily.

VI.

No Homes for the Blind.

VII.

No public responsibility recognised for welfare of the blind.

The Federation, rather than attempting to give financial help, devotes its energies towards an attempt to secure proper legislative provision; and, until this is forthcoming, towards supporting applications made by the blind for municipal help or help through the Benevolent Organisations.

Private organisations are independent; may receive small grants from public funds.

VIII.

Practically no legislative provision.

What does exist, and may exist in the future, is controlled by Governor General, acting for the Ministry of the Interior. (Ministries of Health, Education and Finance).

IX.

Transport. Blind person with guide travels by rail at one fare for the two persons, and blind person travelling by sea to France for business purposes may be given free transport for himself and guide if travelling fourth class.

In the larger towns, trams and buses also permit the blind person with a guide to travel free or at half-cost. Guide dogs have free transport.

Literature and apparatus. All imported, and no remission of Customs duty.

Radio. No arrangements for free or reduced sets. Free radio licences.

GERMANY

I.

Definition of Blindness. Children are blind who have visual acuity less than $1/25$, so that education by sighted methods is impossible, or who later are likely to be so blind that training in work for which eyesight is essential will not be possible.

(Congress for Blind Welfare, Königsberg, 1927).

Adults are blind who cannot find their way unaccompanied in unfamiliar surroundings, or whose visual acuity is $1/50$ – $1/25$, or who cannot count fingers at 2 metres. (Even when vision exceeds $1/25$ if there is serious limitation of field of vision or nystagmus or night blindness, a person is considered practically blind).

(Reich—Army Welfare and Pensions Act 1938; Reich Minister of Labour, March, 1938. Definition needed to determine right to war pensions, and such civilian benefits as welfare payments, etc.).

Number of blind. Ascertainment difficult owing to movements of population due to war. Estimate given is based on Census returns, special count in Westphalia, issue of ration books, etc., but at best can only be rough approximation. Following figure is estimate for the three western zones, Berlin and eastern zone:—42,000 (60 per 100,000).

Estimate received from British zone, based on statistics collected from State Insurance Institute Central Welfare Offices, and St. George Union (Hamburg) gave approximately 15,500 for that zone.

II.

War-blinded. Basic training begins in hospital.

Civilians. Advised by ophthalmologists and officials of State and district welfare corporations *re* training.

Cost of training. (a) War-blinded: Borne by State Insurance (under Disabled Pensions Act 1947) Central welfare offices and self-aid organisations may also give some assistance.

(b) Civilians who are insured persons blinded by accident: Cost borne by Mutual Insurance Societies, under Reich Social Insurance Act 1934.

(c) Other civilians : Cost borne by State and district welfare corporations, under Reich Decree and Regulations 1924. Self-aid organisations may assist.

Training in usual blind crafts is arranged in State Institutes, and in workshops of Self-aid organisations.

Training for higher professions given at the Blindenstudienanstalt, Marburg/Lahn, which accepts students from British, French and American zones. Training for shorthand-typing and telephony arranged at State Institutes for the blind. Special courses for masseurs, piano-tuners and others arranged at some Institutions for the Blind.

In the eastern zone, position is much the same. Industrial training centre at Chemnitz, in addition to the State Institute for the Blind.

III.

Reich Act (1923) relating to the disabled gives blind priority for certain posts.

Disabled Persons Act assists war-blinded by requiring certain employers to engage quota of war-disabled.

Return of employed persons received from St. George Union (covering British part of the Western zone) :—

Workshops	...	...	...	...	1,366
Working at home	...	...	...	...	2,035
On own account	...	...	...	...	108
Factories	...	...	...	...	775
Clerical	...	...	...	...	485
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	55
Professions	...	...	...	...	88
Other	...	...	...	...	452

In a return covering the whole of Germany, percentages are given as follows :—Workshops 20%, Home-workers 35%, business on own account 10%, factories 8%, clerical 12%, commercial representatives 2%, professional 6%, other occupations 7%.

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Baskets, brushes, brooms, knitted and woven goods, etc.

At home : Woodwork, boot-making, Braille transcribing.

Factory processes include work in food, textiles, chemicals, light engineering, assembling.

Professional blind are engaged in lecturing, teaching, law, ministry of religion, music, massage, etc.

IV.

War-blinded receive pensions, and allowances for dependents, guide, attendant, etc.. (Disabled Pensions Act 1947, Army, Welfare and Pensions Act 1938).

Civilians if over 65 (men) and 60 (women) and unable to work and suffering as a result of the war, will shortly be eligible for special allowances in western zone.

Insured blind workers in the western zones are entitled to the same benefits as the seeing (*e.g.*, sickness, disablement, unemployment) under Reich Social Insurance and Unemployment Insurance Acts.

Necessitous blind in receipt of public relief generally granted this at higher rate than the seeing.

Blindness following accident. Insured person entitled to pension.

In the eastern zone provisions are in general similar to those noted above.

Tax remission. In western zones, wage-tax and income-tax are payable by the blind at reduced rates. Some relief also in eastern zone.

Turnover tax. Blind worker not having more than two employees, and organisations dealing with blind-made goods, are given certain reliefs.

No augmentation of wages, but if blind person cannot earn a living wage, and has no pension, he may receive assistance from Public Relief Office. A war-blinded pensioner (whose pension when in full employment is offset against earnings) if he cannot earn a living wage, may receive pension in full.

Help in special emergency may be given in the western zones by Public Welfare Offices, by state and district Welfare Corporations, by Self-help organisations, by voluntary bodies associated with Churches, etc. In the eastern zone, help may be given by Committees for the blind, Inner Mission, etc.

Purchase of blind-made goods. Consideration now being given to revival of regulation whereby up to 1945 public bodies purchased 30 per cent of their requirements in the form of blind-made goods.

In the eastern zone, there is co-operation between local authorities and Co-operative Associations for the Blind, in sale of products made by blind.

V.

War-blinded. Cared for in their homes by Central Welfare Offices in western zones.

Civilian blind. Cared for by district Welfare Corporations (in eastern zone by Committees for the Blind).

In North Rhineland Welfare Association for the Civilian Blind employ district teachers. Otherwise no home-teaching service.

Voluntary help given by St. George Union, German Association, General Association for the Blind (Berlin).

VI.

Two or more Homes in each state, partly financed from public funds. Mainly for aged, but at present in many cases accommodating refugees and their families.

Several Holiday Homes for war-blinded (St. George Union) and one for homeless war-blinded. Several Holiday Homes for civilians (German Federation of the Blind).

Home for deaf-blind at Potsdam-Babelsberg.

Some larger Institutions accept feeble-minded blind.

VII.

Work for the blind in all zones by state and district Welfare Corporations of individual states, sometimes supplemented by Central Welfare Offices. Private organisations : *i.e.*, Self-help Organisations and Welfare Associations for the Blind (independent bodies, but may act as agents for states in certain welfare activities) do much to assist, and may receive some help from public funds.

St. George Union, a voluntary organisation for the war-blinded, acts in advisory capacity for its members in pensions disputes, and runs Holiday Homes. No grants from public funds.

In eastern zone, "everything is governmental."

VIII.

Present legislation is sufficient to meet the needs of education and training of the younger blind, but not fully adequate for :—

- (a) Employment of adults.
- (b) General welfare of the aged.
- (c) Provision of Homes for the aged.

Existing legislation administered by Labour Ministry and Social Welfare Ministry, by state insurance offices, state and district social offices, state and local labour offices, and—in a limited degree in western zone—by Central Welfare offices.

IX.

Transport. Blind persons travelling with guide on business may travel by rail for one-third cost ; blind persons with " Disabled pass " and travelling with guide for any purpose may travel for one fare for the two persons. Guide-dogs transported free.

Persons travelling with guide to and from Institutions travel at reduced fares.

"Disabled pass" entitles to free tram and municipal bus travel, and to some reduction on inland water-ways.

Other allowances. "Disabled pass" entitles to reduced charge for entertainments, and extra fuel, clothing, light, soap and tobacco rations. Homes for the Blind, like Hospitals, granted extra rations.

Literature. Several printing houses of embossed literature.

Several centres for manufacture of apparatus. Cost partly met by charitable donations. Blind are given help to purchase through state and district social offices, or if needed for professional work, through Central Welfare offices.

Customs on imported apparatus remitted on application—no general remission.

Radio. War-blinded and those blinded by accident receive sets free or at reduced cost.

Free radio licences in eastern zone and in some States of Western Zone; granted in others of Western Zone under certain conditions.

GREECE

I.

No standard definition of blindness.

Number of blind: Estimate, 5,850. Based on Census, but certainly a serious under-estimate. 84 per 100,000.

II.

War-blinded visited in Hospital by Lighthouse for the Blind (voluntary organisation). Some training given through Lighthouse, with assistance from Britain and America. American Near East Foundation has given training, since 1945, to eighty-two blind persons in making of brooms, baskets, nets, slippers, rush-seating. No provision for maintenance, except in cases of three beds provided for blind from provinces by the Foundation.

Pupils from School for the Blind, near Athens, study music.

III.

Employed persons include :—

Workshops	...	...	...	...	...	30
Home-workers	...	...	...	...	...	10
Own business	...	...	...	...	...	5
Clerical or professional	...	...	...	...	...	3

(All figures approximate only)

Articles made :

Workshops : Brooms, chairs.

At home : Chair-caning, nets, hand-bags, slippers.

Professional careers open to the blind : Teaching and music.

IV.

War-blinded servicemen granted pensions. No other assistance, except that given to the blind as destitute persons.

V.

Ministry of Social Welfare and Lighthouse for the Blind visit blind in their homes, and ascertain need.

VI.

Home for war-blinded veterans, set up and financed by State. Hostel for blind girls near Athens, supported by voluntary organisations, but receiving limited State aid. Home for the Aged accepts blind persons, and they are also temporarily accepted at Home for Incurables (both are for men and women).

VII.

Government Welfare Centres set up in several districts since 1946. - Ministry of Social Welfare recently sent six members of its staff to England to study blind welfare ; four have now returned, and three are working at Attica Welfare Centre, where they have introduced a home visiting and teaching service, and are instructing workers at other Centres in care of the blind.

Private organisations. Lighthouse for the Blind : Work for blind adults, printing-press of Braille books.

Association of Blind Professional Musicians and Pan-Hellenic Association of the Blind. Associations of the blind, working for their welfare.

Society of the Blind of Peloponesos (Patras). Provides medical care when needed, collects data, gives instruction in Braille.

VIII.

Recent legislation (see VII.) has hardly yet had time to show results. Legislation carried out by Ministry of Social Welfare.

IX.

No travelling facilities.

Literature. Embossed books produced by Lighthouse on press presented by American N.E. Foundation, and financed at present by them.

Apparatus. Imported, and Customs duty remitted to approved organisations on request.

Radio. No provision. No free radio licences.

HOLLAND

I.

No officially accepted definition of blindness but children who cannot use printed text-books accepted in schools for the blind, and adults having only $1/20$ visual power (or having more than $1/20$, but with very limited field of vision) are regarded as blind.

Number of blind. Recent Government survey showed approximately 4,750 (50 per 100,000).

II.

War-blinded soldiers cared for by State, and civilians by local institutions for the blind. Manual training given in workshops, and professional training either in Institutions for the Blind or alongside the seeing. Occasional University training, privately financed.

III.

Blind persons employed as follows :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	616
On own account	...	...	...	...	287
Home workers	...	...	...	...	25
Others	...	...	...	...	201

Articles produced in workshops or at home: brushes, brooms, baskets, mats, textiles, knitted goods, netting.

Factory operations: Metal work, packing, mounting, etc.

Professions followed by the blind include: Ministry of religion, teaching, office work, music, etc.

IV.

No special pensions or allowances for the blind.

Blind persons, working alongside of the seeing, benefit, as they do, from the Social Security provisions; these do not, however, affect the blind in special workshops.

Some tax remission allowed on account of heavier expenses of the blind. Braille printing-houses are exempt from turnover tax.

In larger municipalities blind persons in special workshops may be given augmentation of wages.

Other financial help. Where blind persons in urban areas are granted Poor Law relief, this is paid at a higher rate than that granted to the seeing.

Blind-made goods. If made in municipal workshops, municipality purchases.

V.

No home teaching service.

VI.

Seven Homes, all founded and maintained by voluntary philanthropy. Four take both sexes. (Three of the Homes for blind persons employed in workshops).

VII.

Committee set up (1948) to advise Minister of Social Affairs on blind welfare. This is the first Government action in relation to the blind.

Subsidised workshops are controlled by the municipalities.

Private organisations are independent, and receive little help from public funds.

VIII.

Only legislation affecting the blind that of 1947, whereby all employers having certain number of workers must employ 2 per cent handicapped persons.

IX.

Transport. Blind person with guide may travel for one fare for the two persons on railways and other means of transport.

Literature. Four Braille printing-houses, two mainly for the schools for the blind to which they are attached, others taking orders. Embossed books distributed and financed by private institutions.

Apparatus. Generally imported (with exception of telephone apparatus referred to in Part I of this Report). Remission of Customs duty under consideration.

Radio. No arrangements for sets free or at reduced charge. Regulation for free licences now being prepared.

HUNGARY

I.

Definition of Blindness. Unable to count fingers at one metre.
Above definition accepted by Union for the Blind.

Number of blind: Estimate, based upon Census of 1912,
10,000 (100 per 100,000).

II.

Three Institutions give training, but there is no legal provision
for maintenance.

III.

Blind persons employed :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	204
Home-workers	...	...	...	...	10
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	14
Factories	...	...	...	...	12
Clerical and professional	...	...	...	...	22
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	8
Other occupations	...	...	...	...	30

Articles produced :—

Workshops: Baskets, brushes, textiles.

At home: Brushes, brooms, chair-caning.

Factory operations include: Polishing, metal drilling and
cutting, packing.

Professions followed by the blind include: Teaching, music, retail
trading.

IV.

The blind do not receive help from public funds, but local authorities contribute to the cost of those in Institutions. The Institutions for the Blind to be taken over shortly by Government.

Tax remission. Blind paying only small rate of tax, receive special relief of 75 per cent.

Other financial help. "Occasional assistance from the cities where they live."

V.

No provision for home teaching or visiting, but some voluntary help.

VI.

Four Homes for the Blind, privately founded and maintained. One is for the aged, and all accept persons of both sexes.

VII.

No special legislation for the blind, but the matter is now being considered.

VIII.

Work for the blind is carried on at present by private organisations only.

IX.

Transport. Tramway facilities in Budapest for blind persons accompanied by guide (one fare for two persons).

Literature. Monthly Braille periodical produced by Union for the Blind at its own expense.

Apparatus. Imported, and no customs duty is charged.

Radio. No arrangements for provision of radio. Free radio licences are granted.

ITALY

I.

No universally accepted definition of blindness.

Children unable to follow teaching in ordinary schools accepted in schools for the blind.

Adults. Pensions to war-blinded granted to those unable to count fingers at "reasonable distance." Italian Union of the Blind regards persons with 1/10 vision as blind, and Industrial Insurance also accepts this.

Number of blind. Estimate obtained from information given by Italian Union of the Blind : 27,000 (57 per 100,000).

II.

Training of adults paid for by Administrative Department of Provinces. Training institutions for professional and manual occupations, and Massage School in Florence.

III.

Blind persons employed as follows :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	754
Working at home	...	...	...	...	1,887
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	612
Factories	...	...	...	...	49
Clerical	...	...	...	...	23
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	27
Professional	...	...	...	...	651

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Textiles, baskets, rope, chair-seats, etc.

Home-work : Woven goods, baskets, knitting, tuning.

Factory operations include packing, precision work, portorage.

Among the professions followed by the blind are : Law, journalism, music, sculpture, massage, teaching, etc.

IV.

War-blinded and those blinded by industrial accident are entitled to pensions. Relief to others is administered from public funds through the Italian Union of the Blind, in the form of "continuous assistance cheques" (2,000 lire monthly).

Blind workers, like the seeing, benefit from assistance of social insurance.

Other financial help. Italian Union can give special help in need, *e.g.*, for those starting in business.

Government purchase 15 per cent of all blind-made goods.

V.

No home teaching.

VI.

Several Homes, privately founded, and privately maintained with help from Ministry of Internal Affairs or from municipalities. Mainly for aged, and some for both sexes.

Many blind also accommodated in general Homes for the aged.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind shared by Italian Union of the Blind and National Organisation of Labour for the Blind, both under Government control.

VIII.

Existing legislation administered through Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Public Instruction—both in relation to schools only. No other legislation.

IX.

Transport. Reduced fares (40 per cent for blind and guide) on National Railways, and reduced fares (50 per cent) on other railways. Free or reduced fares on many tram and bus lines.

Literature. National Printing House for the Blind (Florence) manufactures and distributes embossed books. Financially aided by Ministry of Public Instruction and Italian Union of the Blind.

No organisation for manufacture or distribution of apparatus.

Customs duty on apparatus imported for educational services as a gift is remitted.

Radio. No arrangements for free or reduced radio sets. Free radio licences.

NORTHERN IRELAND

I.

Definition of blindness : (a) Children : Unable to derive benefit from teaching in ordinary schools.

(b) Adults : Unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential.

(Prescribed by Ministry of Labour and National Insurance).

Number of blind : Estimate, obtained through Ministry of Labour and Local Authorities, 3,600 (300 per 100,000).

II.

Training with maintenance arranged through Ministry of Labour. Clerical training given in some cases in England.

III.

Figures of employed blind persons generally approximate :—

Workshops	...	...	...	...	160
Working at home	...	...	...	...	60
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	6
Factories	...	...	...	...	5
Clerical and professional	...	...	...	...	14
					<hr/>
					245
					<hr/>

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Baskets, brushes, upholstery, knitting, etc.

At home : Baskets, knitting.

Operations in factories : Mainly repetitive (one personnel manager).

Professions followed by the blind include : Solicitors, chartered accountant etc.

IV.

Pensions and allowances through National Assistance Board and National Insurance.

Social Security. Blind benefit in same measure as the seeing.

Earnings in special workshops supplemented by Local Authorities, which receive grants from Ministry of Labour. Special schemes in workshops to help blind employees in sickness or domestic trouble.

V.

Systematic home visiting and teaching service through Local Authorities Welfare Department.

Voluntary workers assist home teachers in many ways.

Training of workers for the blind. Home teachers may train in England, but training scheme for Northern Ireland now under consideration.

VI.

Two Homes (both sexes accepted) established and partly financed privately, but receiving Government aid.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is shared between :—

- (a) Government : Assists in financing Local Authority Welfare schemes, and in training.
- (b) Local Authorities : Welfare work other than training of young persons.
- (c) Private Organisations : Act as agents for Local Authorities in carrying out their work.

Voluntary organisations (other than workshops, which may receive grants) do not receive financial assistance from public funds.

VIII.

Effect of legislation to improve condition of the blind financially and in relation to general welfare.

Administered through Northern Ireland Ministry of Health and Northern Ireland Ministry of Labour and National Insurance.

IX.

Transport. Reduced railway fares and free or reduced bus fares.

Literature. Imported from England (National Library and National Institute).

Apparatus. Imported.

Radio. Sets obtained free through British Wireless for the Blind Fund. Free radio licences.

NORWAY

I.

Definition of Blindness : (a) Children : No official definition, but in practice, medical practitioner decides when child should be admitted to State School for the Blind.

(b) Adults : Persons are blind whose sight is such that they cannot find their way, or cannot count fingers at more than one metre. (Law of July 16, 1936). Medical Directorate of the Social Department decide whether an adult applying for blind pension comes within the definition.

Blind persons are admitted to Blind Organisation in any case of doubt only after examination by ophthalmologist.

Number of Blind : Estimate 2,400 (80 per 100,000). Based on Census.

II.

Advice given at Eye Clinic as to patient's future.

Blind under 21 are entitled to training at public expense at Blind Institution ; over 21 are also entitled to training, and during training-period have blind pension augmented to cover expenses.

At end of training, employment may be offered at special work shop by the Blind Organisation. Those working on their own helped to sell goods, and others helped to find work in open labour-market. Those wishing for training more costly than that normally offered (*e.g.*, academic or professional) either pay cost, or receive assistance through the Blind Organisation.

III.

Blind employed as follows :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	40
Home-workers	...	...	...	...	561
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	26
Factories	...	...	...	...	71
Clerical and professional	...	...	...	...	124
Others	...	...	...	...	12

Articles made :—

Workshops : Baskets, woodwork, woven goods, upholstery.

At home : Brushes, slippers, knitted goods.

Factory operations : Packing, polishing, machine-operation.

Professions followed by the blind include : Lecturing, teaching, music, massage, writing, etc.

IV.

Blind persons receive pensions of £3 10s. monthly in urban areas and £3 in rural areas, subject to means test.

Persons losing sight through industrial accident, in certain occupations only, receive £7 10s. monthly, not subject to means test.

Some tax remission generally allowed.

Government grants subsidy in form of percentage addition to payments of blind workers, the percentage being highest in trades where profit is smallest.

Raw materials for blind workers obtained through Blind Organisation, which assists in marketing goods.

Blind Organisation also helps in other ways, *e.g.*, purchase of equipment, assistance in sickness, etc.

V.

No organised home-teaching service, but Blind Organisation arranges for qualified blind persons in neighbourhood of home of the newly-blind to teach Braille.

Voluntary workers. Responsible for much Braille transcription for library. Other voluntary workers read to the blind, mend, act as guides, etc. Collection activities throughout the country (500 branches) responsible for raising funds to finance Blind Organisation.

VI.

Three Homes (two for the aged) accommodating nearly 100 persons. One is Holiday Home. Two more Homes for Aged shortly to be built.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is shared by National Government, Local Authorities and Private Organisation (Norges Blindforbund).

National Government provides pensions. Local authorities visit pensioners. All other welfare work is undertaken by Norges Blindforbund, with a sub-section, mainly run by the blind themselves.

Government subsidies for augmentation of wages, Braille printing and libraries.

VIII.

Blind pension is administered by Social Department.

IX.

Transport. No rail facilities. Free tram and bus passes on certain municipally owned companies.

Literature. Braille printing-press belonging to Norges Blindeforbund. Books, periodicals and music sold at less than cost of production.

Apparatus. Produced on small scale only.

Customs duty always remitted on imported apparatus.

Radio. Blind Organisation provides grants towards cost of radio, lent without charge, or sold to blind at cost price. Free radio licence in cases where blind person is necessitous.

POLAND

I.

Definition of Blindness. Unable to count fingers at one metre (Ministry of Health).

Number of blind. Estimate, based on Census of 1921 :—
20,000 (80 per 100,000).

II.

No special provision for training.

III.

Approximately 720 blind employed :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	296
Working at home	...	...	...	...	110
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	30
Factories	...	...	...	...	205
Clerical or professional	...	...	...	...	79

Articles made :—

Workshops : Brushes, baskets, machine knitted goods.

At home : Brushes, baskets, hand-knitted goods.

Operations in factories : Working hand and electric-presses, checking, box-making, packing, corking.

Professions followed by the blind include : Massage, music, small trading, journalism.

IV.

Blind do not receive pensions, but may be given small monetary help in cases of need.

Social Security provisions benefit blind workers in factories, workshops and offices.

From 1945 to 1948, the blind received special food-cards in common with certain classes of sighted workers; these were gradually withdrawn from the sighted workers in favour of money supplement. The blind, not being workers, lost their food-cards and did not at first receive any compensation, but special concession was made and sum of money distributed to the blind in lieu of the cards.

V.

Two home visitors, one under the auspices of U.N.O., the other under the Federation of Blind Workers. They do not teach.

Voluntary workers at Lodz (Friends of the Blind) aid University students.

VI.

Eight Homes (two for women, six for both sexes) mainly financed by Regional authorities, but one founded and financed by Federation of Blind Workers. Two of the Homes reserved for the aged.

VII.

Regional and local authorities mainly responsible for the blind, but where their resources are insufficient, Government aid may be given. Similarly, Government may aid private organisations.

Regional authorities maintain the Homes for the Blind, and local authorities may give individual blind persons small monetary aid. Only completely independent private organisation receiving no aid from public funds is the Friends of the Blind.

VIII.

No special legislation relating to the blind.

IX.

Transport. Rail and tramway facilities, generally permitting guide to travel free.

Literature. Braille books manufactured and distributed by Federation of Blind Workers at Warsaw.

Apparatus. Also manufactured and distributed by the Federation. Customs duty is remitted on application.

No Talking Book provision.

Radio. No provision for sets free or at reduced cost. Free radio licences.

SCOTLAND

I.

Definition of blindness. As in England and Wales.

Number of blind : 8,632 (166 per 100,000). Collated by Department of Health from returns of Local Authorities.

II.

War-blinded. Early rehabilitation, succeeded by training, arranged by Scottish National Institution for the War-blinded.

Civilians. Edinburgh and South-East of Scotland Society for the Blind about to open Re-adjustment Centre for pre-vocational training. Home teaching service helps in re-adjustment to blindness.

Training provided by Ministry of National Service : (a) in special workshops and factories ; (b) in professional and clerical occupations, at the Royal Blind School, Edinburgh.

III.

Blind persons are employed as follows :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	857
Working at home	...	...	...	...	43
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	66
Factories	...	...	...	...	30
Clerical	...	...	...	...	22
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	3
Professions	...	...	...	...	88
Other occupations	...	...	...	...	57

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Baskets, mats, mattresses, knitwear, etc.

At home : Baskets, rugs, Braille transcription, knitting, etc.

Factory operations include : Packing, machine operation, gauge testing.

Careers of professional blind include : Law, ministry of religion, lecturing, physiotherapy, teaching, music.

IV.

Economic provision is as in England and Wales.

V.

Home teaching service is provided by voluntary agencies ; the teachers visit, give instruction in embossed types and handicrafts, organise social centres, etc.

Training of home teachers (blind or seeing) for one year or more is arranged by the Royal School for the Blind, and the Home Teaching Society for the Blind, Edinburgh, in preparation for the examination of the College of Teachers of the Blind. Summer schools for persons concerned in blind welfare.

VI.

Five Homes for the Blind (three residential, two holiday ; two for aged women). All privately established. Payments made by Local Authorities towards maintenance in residential Homes. One Home for women needing medical care.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind shared between :—

(a) National Government. Legislation, inspection, financial grants.

(b) Regional Authority (Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind). Co-ordinating body, concerned with all aspects of blind welfare.

(c) Local Authorities. Training and employment at Glasgow Blind Asylum.

(d) Private Organisations. Training, employment, home teaching. Receive grants for work done as agents of Local Authorities, and also provide additional services for which voluntary funds are raised.

VIII.

Effect of legislation has been progressively to make general and mandatory, services previously voluntary and local.

Government Departments include :—Department of Health for Scotland, Scottish Education Department, Ministries of National Insurance, Labour, Pensions, National Assistance Board, Post Office, Customs and Excise.

IX.

Transport. Blind person with guide travelling for business on British railways pays one fare for two persons. Some tram and bus facilities.

Literature. Obtained from Royal Blind School, Edinburgh, with help from Local Authorities, benevolent funds and customers' payments.

Apparatus. As for literature.

Talking Book and Radio. Services as in England and Wales.

Free radio licences.

SPAIN

I.

Definition of blindness. Those who have less than $1/10$ vision (Wecker). (Definition for Accident Insurance).

Those who cannot count fingers at one metre (admission to Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos).

Number of blind: Estimate, based on membership of Organizacion Nacional is 15,000 (57 per 100,000). Another estimate gives total nearer 25,000.

II.

Four centres of Organizacion Nacional where blind may be trained.

III.

By far the greater number of blind persons (about 9,000) are employed by the Organizacion Nacional in the sale of lottery tickets in all large towns; the educated blind are also engaged in clerical work and telephony in connection with the Organization's scheme.

There are also about thirty blind persons employed in special workshops, making brushes and brooms, fifty working at home on chair-caning, basketry, etc., and eighty-three employed by the Organizacion Nacional in two sweet-making factories, and in one for chemical products.

IV.

Organizacion Nacional gives pensions to its workers, equivalent to those of the seeing, according to length of service, free medical treatment, sick pay, family allowances, marriage, maternity and death grants. No augmentation of wages, but Organizacion helps those unable to earn a living wage.

V.

No home teaching service, but Organizacion workers visit if required.

VI.

No special Homes for the adult blind, but two privately founded Homes accept blind persons. In each provincial capital, a Home for the Aged which admits also blind persons.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is undertaken by the Organizacion Nacional which has branches throughout the country, and is under Government auspices.

Organizacion receives certain State aid, but no assistance from provincial or local funds.

VIII.

All legislation for the blind concerns the work of Organizacion Nacional.

IX.

Transport. Rail and tramway facilities allow blind person with guide to travel for one fare.

Literature. Embossed books produced by Organizacion Nacional and distributed to libraries, students, etc.

Apparatus. As literature.

Radio. No arrangements for supply. Free radio licences on request.

SWEDEN

I.

Definition of blindness. Children : Those who cannot profit by teaching in ordinary schools. Adults : Those who have not more than 2/60 normal vision, or those who cannot move in unfamiliar surroundings without guidance.

Number of blind : 6,014 (100 per 100,000). Figure based on Census of 1930.

Definition of blindness as above required by those applying for special supplementary disablement pension, which may be granted to the blind.

II.

Two State-sponsored training-centres for the blind, one for men and one for women. Training given in usual blind trades. Tuition for males free, and Government grant covers part board-lodging, remaining sum being paid either by trainee or by the commune to which he belongs. Similarly tuition is granted to women in residential training-centre.

No special training for blind persons wishing to take up occupation other than those generally followed by the blind. Official Employment Exchanges have officials who find work for physically handicapped.

III.

Employed blind :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	100
Work at home	...	...	...	...	600
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	10
Factories	...	...	...	...	100
Clerical	...	...	...	...	10
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	3
Professions	...	...	...	...	not known

Figures approximate only.

Articles produced :—

Workshops : Brushes, baskets, dish-cloths, rugs.

At home : Brushes, baskets, knitting, assembling.

Factories : Various—not specified.

Professions : Secretarial, music, etc.

IV.

In addition to normal disablement pension (" invalid's pension ") blind persons may receive " blind man's supplement " of 700 cr. *per annum*.

Blind benefit from Social Security provisions against sickness, unemployment, etc.

No special tax remission, other than that allowed to persons who, on account of physical handicap or old age, cannot pay full tax.

No other financial assistance, but if income does not provide adequate livelihood, blind may benefit, like other necessitous people, by municipal assistance.

Help in emergency. May be given by Crown Princess Margaret Working Committee for the Blind, which has branches in the provinces, and co-operates with Association of the Blind and the State School for the Blind in meeting special need, such as purchase of house or workshop.

No arrangements for purchase of blind-made goods by public authorities. Government aids blind worker with materials and marketing of goods.

V.

No home teaching service, but organisation for the blind may visit and help in special need.

VI.

Five Homes, two for both sexes, one for aged men, two for aged women. Three are privately financed, and one financed by Government, one by city of Stockholm.

Government has workshop and Home for blind suffering from other handicaps.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind shared by National Government, Regional and Local Authorities. Government provides training and part board/lodging during training, and gives grant at end of

training for purchase of tools and materials. Continues to provide materials and to help with marketing after blind person has been established.

Government also grants the "Blind man's supplement" in addition to the "invalid's pension."

Annual subsidy paid to De Blindas Forening (Association of the Blind).

County Councils aid organisations of the blind, usually with object of reducing cost of raw materials needed by blind craftsman or subsidising sale of articles.

Local authorities ("rural authorities") assist in paying board-lodging during training of those who cannot afford cost themselves. In addition, most municipalities contribute to different organisations for the blind.

Association of the Blind (De Blindas Forening) has branches in each county. A State subsidy is paid to the Association, and it also may receive grants from the municipalities in which its local branches are situated.

VIII.

Every Swedish citizen whose working capacity is seriously impaired may receive Disablement Pension ("Invalid's pension") and blindness is regarded as such disablement. In addition the blind man receives a "blind man's supplement." The Disablement Pension is not subject to means test.

All matters relating to the blind other than education dealt with by Department of Social Welfare.

IX.

Transport. Guide dogs travel free on railways. Free bus and tram transport in some areas.

Literature. Printing press for school-books (Tomtebodas) which has Government subsidy, enabling books to be sold below cost.

One private organisation producing books needed by students. Number of books also printed at cost of other organisations.

Apparatus. Mainly provided through Association of the Blind and sold at cost price. Customs duty is not remitted on imported apparatus.

Radio provided free or at reduced cost to needy blind. Radio licences issued free to necessitous blind.

SWITZERLAND

NOTE.—Although at the present time the blind in Switzerland only benefit by the general legislation for relief of destitution, a number of organisations interested in the welfare of handicapped persons (Pro Infirmis) have combined to endeavour to secure State recognition of their needs and a motion was recently presented at the session of the Federal Chamber. It urged that through the Association Pro Infirmis (which is a co-ordinating body, uniting twelve Swiss or regional associations for the welfare of the handicapped) State help should be forthcoming for training, employment and general welfare.

I.

No official definition of blindness, but Swiss Federation regards as blind those unable to do work requiring sight.

Number of blind : Estimate, based on Census of 1930 is 2,500 (50–60 per 100,000).

II.

No Government provision for training, but two centres for the handicapped, including the blind, are now being established.

III.

No exact statistics of employed persons. About 600–700 are employed in workshops, including fifty in five soap-factories set up for the blind. Factory workers number ten, typists four, commercial representatives “quelques douzaines”; number of home-workers and professional workers not known.

Articles produced in workshops and at home include : Brushes, baskets, knitted goods, chair-caning.

Factory operations : Cutting, stamping, packing.

Careers of professional blind include : Teaching, massage, music.

IV.

Only insured persons entitled to pensions.

No augmentation of wages, but organisations for the blind or public assistance help generously in need (“Real distress is rare”). Blind persons may insure against sickness at one-third normal rate, the Federation of the Blind and agency for the blind paying balance.

Other forms of assistance include help with holidays, grants in need, payment of part cost of guide-dogs, assistance in training, provision of equipment.

No legal provision for purchase of blind-made goods, but public attitude is sympathetic.

V.

No home-teaching service, but local representatives of organisations for the blind may visit. Two blind persons visit deaf-blind regularly.

VI.

Fifteen Homes for the Blind, some for both sexes, some reserved for the aged. All are founded and financed privately. Two are reserved for the feeble-minded.

VII.

All work for the blind is done by private organisations, working independently. Some may receive small grants from public funds for specific services, but this is exceptional.

VIII.

No legislation.

IX.

Transport. Blind person with guide (or guide-dog) travels for one fare when on business, by train, tram or steamship. Blind travelling to and from home and Institution are granted reduced fares.

Literature. Two small Braille printing presses for magazines; books and apparatus (except watches) generally imported.

Cost of production of literature and apparatus defrayed by blind organisation. No remission of Customs on imported goods, except by special application.

Radio. Provided free on loan or at reduced cost to the blind. No free wireless licences, but charge sometimes remitted on application.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

N.B.—Term "Federal" refers to the National Government, and "State" to the forty-eight sovereign states, with regional autonomy and authority within their boundaries.

I.

Definition of Blindness. Visual acuity not exceeding 20/200 (Snellen) in better eye with correcting lenses, or visual acuity greater than 20/200, but with limitation in fields of vision such that widest diameter of visual field subtends angle no greater than 20 degrees.

(Committee of Statistics of the Blind). Generally accepted definition by U.S. Treasury, education authorities, agencies for the blind.

Number of blind : Estimate based by statisticians on 1940 Census : 230,354 (175 per 100,000).

II.

Early rehabilitation carried out by (a) home teacher or social case-worker, including instruction in day-to-day matters, contact with family, advice on future ; (b) group teaching and pre-vocational training (Braille, crafts, typing, use of remaining senses, domestic science, etc.) carried out at public cost, at home or at residential adjustment centre.

Training. Grants in aid under Federal Law to all states, providing vocational rehabilitation and training, with maintenance, equipment and placement. State agency provides funds for training in workshop or institution of higher learning. American Foundation for the Blind has training-course for prospective blind welfare-workers.

III.

Employment of the blind includes :—

Special workshops	...	...	...	...	3,000
Manual occupations at home	...	...	...	...	3,000
Business on own account	...	...	...	...	2,000
Factories	...	...	...	...	2,000-2,500
Clerical	...	...	...	...	500
Commercial representatives	...	...	...	...	500
Professions	...	...	...	...	750
Other occupations	...	...	...	...	1,500

Articles produced :—

Special workshops : Mats, mattresses, sewn articles for hospitals, piano-tuning, chair-caning.

At home : Sewing, leather-goods assembling, industrial assembling, chair-caning.

Factory operations : Wide variety, including checking, packing, assembling, burring.

Careers of professional blind include : Music, lecturing, teaching, massage.

IV.

In some states, pensions are paid as of right, subject to means. In most, however, financial assistance is given adjusted to individual need. Grants in aid under Federal law enable states to provide for the needy blind ; the blind person receives (from Federal and

state funds jointly) grants to make up personal income to agreed figure.

By Federal law, the blind are allowed 600 dollars tax relief.

War-blinded in some states exempted from real estate tax up to certain amount.

Augmentation of wages paid in some workshops where earnings fall below a certain amount ; elsewhere, if earnings of the blind fall below a living wage, help may be given under programme of Aid to Needy Blind. Blind-made goods are purchased by units of U.S. Government at fair competitive prices, and similar provisions are made in several states.

V.

Care of the blind at home includes home-teaching service, nation-wide library service of books and Talking Books, many free periodicals, recreational facilities, etc. Home teaching service generally carried out by state agencies, but is in a few cases under private auspices. Voluntary help is mainly sporadic. It includes reading, guiding, visiting, and important Braille transcription service for text-books and music.

Training of workers for the blind sponsored at several Universities by the American Foundation. Placement agents trained by Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

VI.

About forty Homes for the Blind, generally privately founded, but partly supported from public funds. Mainly for one sex.

No special Homes for those with other handicaps, but deaf-blind frequently admitted to Homes for the Blind.

VII.

Responsibility for the blind is shared :—

Federal Government provides, or makes available through grants in aid, services outside financial capacity of state or local authorities, *e.g.*, services to war-blinded, including pensions and rehabilitation, and services to all blind persons, including postage facilities, library provision, tax remission, grants in aid to enable States to give financial help to the needy, etc.

State authorities provide aids and services outside scope of local authorities, *e.g.*, registration, home teaching, aid to needy blind, etc. Local authorities co-operate with State authorities, investigate need, care for indigent in County Homes, etc.

Private Organisations. These are flexible, and able to experiment in fields of activity for which public funds are not available.

They may be (a) National in scope, providing radio, special equipment, supplementary services, Talking Books, literature for workers for the blind, training courses for such workers, etc.

(b) State or local in scope, providing recreational facilities, placement, vocational guidance, management of Homes, etc.

Private organisations usually work independently, raising own funds, and only receiving grants from public funds for special services rendered.

VIII.

Legislation has given an impetus to all services, greater uniformity in financial assistance, greater sense of public responsibility, and recognition of the capacity of the blind.

Government departments concerned are :—

On the Federal level, the U.S. Treasury and P.O. Departments, Library of Congress, Federal Security Agency, Veterans' Administration. On the States level, the State Department of Public Welfare, State Department of Institutions and State Board of Vocational Education. On the local level, the County and City Departments of Public Welfare and County or City Board of Education.

IX.

Transport. Blind persons with a guide travel with one ticket by rail, and similar concessions are made by bus. A few concessions also in local transport. By ship, blind person and guide travel for one-and-a-half fare on many lines.

Literature. Four printing houses. American Printing House (Government subsidised) supplies schools with free books and apparatus. Library of Congress, with Federal grant, supplies embossed books to libraries.

Apparatus. American Printing House, American Foundation and Perkins Institution supply the blind and agencies for the blind at cost. Private funds for the purpose are aided by Federal grants.

Talking book records manufactured and sold at cost by American Foundation and American Printing House to Library of Congress, which distributes to libraries and schools for the blind. Machines are manufactured for and distributed on loan by Library of Congress, or sold at cost by American Foundation to agencies for the blind and to individuals.

Radio. Sets supplied free or at reduced cost on nation-wide basis by American Foundation for the Blind ; in one area a similar service is performed by a private agency.

No radio licences are required by listeners in the United States.

PART II

PROCEEDINGS

Opening Session

Thursday Morning, 4th August, 1949

MR. W. MCG. EAGAR (Secretary to the Conference), read the following messages from :—

The Hon. Harry S. Truman, President of the United States :—

“ I welcome this opportunity of wishing you success in your endeavours in behalf of sightless people throughout the world.

“ As Honorary President of the American Foundation for the Blind, I am familiar with the outstanding work which has already been done for the blind. I am aware too of the need for strengthening services offered them through both public and private agencies. It is encouraging to know that your Conference is taking steps to meet this need, not only within each of the seventeen nations but also through a basic international programme.

“ I know that you will receive the whole-hearted co-operation in your work of Mr. Michael J. Shortley, who, as Director of our Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, is representing the Federal Security Agency of the United States Government at the Conference in Oxford.

“ In the United States our work with, and for, the blind has demonstrated what the blind themselves have known all along : That given the proper opportunities, blind men and women can take their full place among their fellow citizens and make their full contribution to the social and economic life of their communities.

“ May I now wish you Godspeed in your work, and convey my hope and belief that your Conference will become a milestone in progress toward our common goal—the goal of providing adequate opportunities for the blind to share in every broad field open to their more fortunate neighbours, here in the United States, and in Canada and across the seas.”

The Right Hon. Clement R. Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain :—

“ I have heard with great interest of the International Conference of Workers for the Blind, and can assure you that the discussions and resolutions of the Conference will be closely studied by my colleague, the Minister of Health.

We in this country are justly proud of the Welfare Service for the Blind which is provided by local authorities and voluntary organisations and which aims at ensuring that all blind persons have the maximum opportunity of sharing in, and contributing to, the

life of the community. But there is always room for improvement, and the development of new services, and at the same time as we make our contribution to the work of the Conference we shall, I know, be gaining fresh ideas from the experience of the other countries represented.

I send you my best wishes for the success of the Conference and feel sure that the results of your deliberations will redound to the benefit of blind persons throughout the seventeen participating nations."

Senor Jaime Torres Bodet, Director General of U.N.E.S.C.O. :—

"It is my privilege on behalf of U.N.E.S.O. to send congratulations to the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, New York, and to the National Institute for the Blind, London, for having organised this small but vital International Congress on The Place of the Blind in the Modern World. May I send you all, including the representatives of the seventeen countries present, the hopes of U.N.E.S.C.O. and of myself that your deliberations may prove to be another valuable contribution towards the widening of the lives of blind men and women? Because of the magnificent work of voluntary organisations in the past 170 years and of growing State social services since the beginning of this century, the blind have been helped to a great, and often amazing, degree to attain the same general status in society enjoyed by their seeing brothers and sisters. Even so, we are aware that much still remains to be done, not only in repairing the damage done by many years of war and political turmoil, but in strengthening and extending the existing services. I note that your present Congress will be concentrating upon the establishment of a practical uniform standard of blind welfare service throughout Europe. That indeed is an excellent programme. May I express the hope that in the not too distant future, study may be given on an international scale to the very pressing need for expanded services to the large groups of blind people in Asia, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere, whom few of the benefits of modern technique and modern social service have yet reached?

I am glad to let you know that on the initiative of the Government of India, U.N.E.S.C.O. has agreed to consider, at its General Conference in September, proposals bearing upon increased uniformity in the world's Braille script. As you are aware, the lack of co-ordination in the introduction of Braille to the languages of Asia and Africa, splendid though these efforts were, has given from five to eight contradictory Brailles in several important linguistic areas. Other Braille problems exist elsewhere. As a result, almost no current Braille literature is available in the mother-tongues of

these areas, and no substantial Braille press is yet in operation. The Governments and the peoples concerned are faced with the problem that, until this chaotic condition is remedied, neither blind education, nor the independence and employability of the blind, can make the progress which is so urgently needed.

Although this Braille question lies outside the scope of your Congress, I would ask you to consider for a moment the problem which exists in large areas where no unified Braille system is now in use. It is only through a full understanding between all nations, including those which have achieved the benefits of a standardised system, that agreement on a world-wide basis may be obtained. I need not underline to you, who are familiar with this problem, the benefits to the blind everywhere from such an agreement. I shall warmly welcome any contribution which individual delegates may make to the study of this problem by Unesco. It is our earnest desire that wise counsel from all quarters should be given to the work of U.N.E.S.C.O. in this sphere. It is, in fact, essential that not only each linguistic area should be consulted, but also the different points of view on how the goal may be best attained. Such final recommendations as may be arrived at under U.N.E.S.C.O. auspices will thus be the result of complete discussion and agreement between qualified representatives of all the languages concerned. As one who has been closely associated with the task of banishing illiteracy from large populations, I am naturally equally enthusiastic in doing what lies in my power to render a similar service to the blind, and I trust that U.N.E.S.C.O.'s contribution in this field may prove of wide and lasting value. Once again, I should like to thank you all for the opportunity to air these views, and to express my best wishes to you for a successful meeting."

Helen A. Keller, L.H.D., LL.D. :—

"It was a matter of profound regret to me that I could not be with you all at the World Conference for the Blind in Oxford this summer. But I rejoice that it is now an accomplished fact, and I send my affectionate greetings and congratulations to the delegates.

If they hold together, with the perseverance, the enthusiasm and self-sacrificing courage shown by the United Nations, their splendid objective will surely be fulfilled as the years go by—to bring within the reach of every capable blind person in the world the fruits of civilisation, education, employment and cheerfulness.

The delegates, and the peoples behind them, are gaining new capacity to care about other blind men and women all over the earth, and they are labouring to render blindness, not a curse, but a new way to the goodness of life. The delegates will demonstrate to their

Governments convincingly that a state is truly civilised and progressive, only when it watches equally over the rehabilitation and the happiness of all its unfortunate people.

Confidently, as always, I look to the National Institute for the Blind to champion the handicapped everywhere. Its faithful adherence to the principle that the best interest of the blind in each country is rooted in the welfare of all, will be a triumphant factor in the forward spirit and final achievement of the second World Conference for the Blind."

The Nineteenth International Congress of Blind Esperantists :—

"The Nineteenth International Congress of Blind Esperantists from ten countries, now meeting at Bournemouth, greets respectfully the International Conference of the Blind at Oxford, wishing prosperity and success to its valuable work. The Congress suggests that, by degrees, the neutral auxiliary language Esperanto be used internationally in work relating to the blind."

The Academic Fellowship Petronella Moens (Holland) :—

"National circle of blind intellectuals and artists sends you good wishes for a fruitful exchange of views, not least about the position of blind intellectuals in the modern world."

OPENING ADDRESS

DR. ROBERT B. IRWIN (Chairman of the Conference), having ascertained that 15 of the delegates present had attended the World Conference on Work for the Blind held in New York in 1931, complimented them on their long and sustained interest in the welfare of the blind of their own countries during the eighteen years which had since elapsed, a period tragically disturbed by the second World War. He then addressed the Conference as follows :—

"I have been asked to say a word about the character of this Conference. During the past two or three years we have received letters from all over Europe and America asking if we could hold another Conference, somewhat similar in scope to that held in 1931. There was no doubt that there was need for such a Conference, but the question was how to make it count for something ; how could we be sure that the blind people would be a little better off after such a Conference, and how might our thinking be a little more clarified as a result ? So we studied the other Conference, which had been somewhat of a failure and we decided that one trouble was that there were too many set papers on certain subjects—often subjects

which the rest of the listeners knew all about. Further, there had been too many long speeches, praising what we were doing ourselves, and helping to advertise our work. So we decided this time that we would call together a group of people as broadly representative as possible, the people who knew work for the blind in their own countries, but not so many people that we could not carry on discussions. We worked out a plan whereby there would be no papers, but topics at each Session for discussion. We hoped that as a result we would be able to arrive at definite conclusions.

“ Broadly speaking, the aim of the Conference is to discover the state of welfare work for the blind in the countries represented. We have made a long step forward in that objective through our questionnaire. I want to express the appreciation of the Organising Committee for the time that you all spent on this questionnaire. I was amazed that people took it so seriously, compiled information which no one but you could compile, and sent it in to the central point. Also I want to thank Miss Thomas and others in London, who gathered that material together and summarised it, and the N.I.B. for Brailleing it and for the letterpress copies.

“ The aim of the Conference is to work out a minimum basic programme which we can all accept, and on which any country may build a sound programme of its own. All the countries in the world, for that matter, are now in a state of flux. They are examining what they have been doing, and trying to revise their plans in almost every respect. Welfare work in general is coming in for such an examination, and it is very important to us that work for the blind finds its proper place in the welfare work of the country ; we must see to it that the blind are not overlooked among all the other people who need Government help, but are dealt with in the way which our experience has demonstrated is most helpful. Work for the blind is older than work for almost any other handicapped group, and we must be careful not to be thrown back into the handicapped group in general, and have to make a start all over again. In progressive countries, friends of the blind must fight hard to hold the ground already won, and in more retarded countries they must get their work started upon a sound basis.

“ In our discussions, I hope that we will not only think about the blind peoples in our own countries, but also about those in other countries, not as fortunate as our own. In the course of these discussions we will all learn from one another and we can learn something from almost every country. I have travelled a great deal, but I have never been in a country whose work for the blind was so backward that I did not get some idea that I could take home, that was helpful to the blind in America.

" I hope that our energetic and progressive delegates who come here expecting great things will not be discouraged if we do not get into our minimum programme everything that they would like to see there. What we want to be sure of is that our minimum programme (and it must be only a minimum programme), is based upon principles which do not come into conflict with the other work beyond this minimum programme which we want to see carried out. The programme on which we will work, and the resolutions which we will adopt, if wisely drawn, will have a far-reaching influence for years to come. I am sure that many of those resolutions will be very useful in my own country in support of measures for which we are working, and I feel confident that everyone here will find them very helpful. Perhaps we can call it a Magna Carta for the blind.

" I want to reiterate that we are all in a dangerous situation so far as work for the blind is concerned. I know that in America, and in other countries, we run a serious risk of losing some of the things that we have gained. In an effort to work out a comprehensive programme for unfortunate people, we want to be sure that the blind are not misplaced. We must give serious and careful consideration to the resolutions presented each day and I hope that you will all support the Chairman by making comparatively short speeches which are terse and to the point. We should avoid bringing out information that is already in the hands of the delegates through the results of the questionnaire.

" Each day we will have our special topic and if we are to make progress we must all keep to it. If we get through with the topic, perhaps arrangements can be made to have some other things brought up which the Organising Committee have overlooked. Every delegate has a right to be heard, and those observers who are not delegates may, by special arrangement, be permitted to speak, unless it happens that the regular delegates are taking up all the time ; I don't think they will."

Dr. Irwin then went on to explain one or two points in connection with procedure. Delegates would speak from the place where they were sitting and were asked to speak clearly and not too rapidly. A tentative draft resolution would be presented at the beginning of each Session. Those resolutions had not been drawn up in order to anticipate conclusions, but to provide the substance of resolutions which would be framed in accordance with the discussions. At each Session a special Committee would be appointed which would re-draft the resolution in the light of the discussion. That re-draft would be turned over to the Organising Committee,

and submitted for approval to the Conference. Throughout the Conference voting would be by show of hands. Someone would be selected to define and explain each resolution and to answer any questions on it. Interpretation of English into French would be simultaneous ; French into English would be consecutive.

Dr. Irwin said that he had been asked why there was no resolution on Education. There was not time to give to it at this Conference ; it was so large a subject as to be worthy of a special Conference. In order that there should be no misunderstanding about its importance Dr. Farrell was to be asked to put forward a special resolution on the subject, and educationists were invited to meet him after the Session.

It was realised that there were many other topics not included in the Conference's resolutions. If delegates wanted some special resolution considered, they should place the matter before Mr. Eagar, and then the Organising Committee would consider it sympathetically and do what they could to include it.

Members of the Conference had met at great cost and inconvenience and the speaker felt sure that they were going to achieve something worthy of the time and expense involved. They would all work together and learn from one another, and when they went away, the set of resolutions they took with them was going to be a help to all in their own countries and in other countries all over the world.

On being asked by Herr E. Jorgensen (Denmark), whether it would be possible to have the revised resolutions put into Braille, Dr. Irwin replied in the negative.

Delegates were expected to vote as individuals.

Members of the Conference were informed that an exhibition of apparatus and appliances for the blind, and articles made by the blind, had been arranged under the supervision of Mr. Jermy of the National Institute for the Blind.

Second Session

Thursday Afternoon, 4th August, 1949

At the opening of the Conference, the Warden of Merton College, MR. G. R. G. MURE, attended to express his pleasure, and that of the Fellows of the College, at being able to provide accommodation. He hoped that the delegates' stay in Oxford would be pleasant, and that the Conference would advance the work for which it was convened, with which all members of the College had great sympathy.

REGISTRATION

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom) presented the following resolution on Registration :—

“ That in every country the law should provide that a Register should be compiled of all persons suffering from total blindness, or such defect of vision that they require special education or special assistance to save them from destitution, and/or to enable them to share in the economic and cultural life of the nation.”

Mr. Eagar explained that the resolution in its original form had been entitled Ascertainment, but owing to the difficulty of finding a satisfactory translation of that term, it had been decided to change the title to Registration. It was intended to cover the question of the necessity for every country to ascertain how many blind people it had in its population. It was clear that, in each of the countries which had been asked to complete the questionnaire, there was a wide variation in the number of known blind, which could not be accounted for by a variation in the incidence of blindness. The Organising Committee had taken the view that it would not be practicable at this Conference to construct a definition of blindness acceptable in all countries, and the resolution had been framed to imply that each country must decide for itself what degree of defect of eyesight should be recognised as blindness. The next point to consider was how far it could be urged that every country should have an expressly compiled Register. In some countries, the only basis of ascertainment was a statement by the person himself that he was blind. In Great Britain the Register, started in 1920 in a comprehensive form, had proved itself the indispensable basis of the national system of blind welfare; the necessity for such a Register should be laid down by the Conference, although it was realised that it would be difficult in some countries to construct the necessary machinery for some years to come.

On the Chairman stating that the system of registration in Great Britain was perhaps the most comprehensive to be found in any country, and asking for an explanation of the procedure involved in compiling the Register, Mr. Cormack (United Kingdom), gave a brief summary of the machinery for registration in Great Britain.

DR. GABRIEL FARRELL (U.S.A.), stated that a compulsory system of registration of the blind was in force in Massachusetts.

MONSIEUR A. SALIS (France), stated that in France a law had existed since 1945 ordering the compulsory declaration of blindness, and a Census made by the Ministry of Health included the following figures :—

Totally, or considered totally, blind : 18,000 ; others considered eligible for white stick : 2,800 ; (2,400 are war blinded).

PROFESSOR P. BENTIVOGLIO (Italy), said that in Italy one organisation existed to deal with the war-blinded, the industrially blind and the civilian independent blind. Through the financial assistance now available to all blind persons, it would in the near future become possible to complete a Register of the blind in Italy.

MONSIEUR A. BALLISTE (France-Algeria), while agreeing with the substance of the resolution, thought its form should be more imperative, and that, in place of the words " the law should provide," words to the effect that " the Conference deems it absolutely necessary, or indispensable " should be substituted.

HERR JORGENSEN (Denmark) put forward the suggestion that the resolution might recommend a definition of blindness. He emphasised the danger of a too narrow definition which would exclude many who needed aid. On the other hand, a wider definition might bring in so many who were only partially handicapped as to obscure the interests of the blind.

PROFESSOR DR. C. STREHL (Germany), was in favour of a definition of blindness which excluded partially sighted persons.

COLONEL E. A. BAKER (Canada), explained the procedure for registration in Canada. It was found that one of the best methods of keeping a Register up-to-date was through the concessions which were administered to the blind.

DR. H. VOIGT (Zonal Blind Welfare Council, Hamburg-Altona, Germany), on behalf of Dr. K. Trapny (Director of the Vienna Institute for the Blind), explained that in Austria blind persons of school age were registered ; children under school age were not registered, although such registration was highly desirable.

In summing up the discussion, Mr. Eagar said that the Conference would have to decide whether its resolutions were to be put in the form of requests, or prayers, or demands. The Organising Committee felt, in considering this matter, that the Conference would not be in a position to be mandatory.

On the question whether the Conference could frame an international definition of blindness, the Chairman pointed out that a definition drawn up by this Conference, all the members of whom were laymen, might not be acceptable to the medical profession.

MR. C. H. W. G. ANDERSON (United Kingdom), in supporting the wording of the resolution as it stood, thought that it might include a minimum definition (*e.g.*, 1/20 or 3/60th Snellen) which seemed to be a reasonable compromise.

After further discussion, the Chairman announced that the following delegates would be appointed a Committee to re-draft the resolution in accordance with the procedure already outlined :—

COLONEL E. A. BAKER (Canada).

MONSIEUR A. BALLISTE (France-Algeria).

MR. E. HAKKINEN (Finland).

The Chairman wished first, however, to obtain the views of the Conference on the following points :—

- (1) *Phraseology of the Resolution* :—29 delegates voted in favour of the wording of the resolution as circulated, and 5 in favour of using a more imperative tone.
- (2) *Compulsory or Voluntary Registration* : 16 delegates voted in favour of voluntary registration, and 19 in favour of compulsory registration.
- (3) *Inclusion of Definition of Blindness* : 26 delegates voted in favour of including a minimum definition of blindness, and 7 in favour of leaving the framing of a definition to individual countries.

(*For Final Resolution on Registration, see Page 140*).

Third Session

Friday Morning, 5th August, 1949

REHABILITATION AND TRAINING

MR. ERIC T. BOULTER (U.S.A.), presented the following resolution on Rehabilitation and Training :—

“ That the primary objective of the general plan for enabling the blind to take their place in the community should be to ensure that those who can work should be provided with the opportunity and encouraged to do so, being re-educated, and trained, where necessary, for the employment for which they are best suited. The plan should also ensure that blind persons who cannot work should receive adequate means of subsistence, and should make arrangements for overcoming the handicaps which blindness imposes on social life.”

Mr. Boulter explained that the resolution had been worded in a simple and self-explanatory form, in accordance with the Organising Committee's view that the meaning and implication of the resolutions should be clear, not only to workers for the blind and other interests represented at the Conference, but to Governments and international organisations whose interest and support it was desired to secure. It might not be necessary for every blind person to be completely re-trained. The mental and physical capacity

and past experience of each person must be taken into account, and for that reason he hoped that the words "where necessary" would be retained in the final form of the resolution.

HERR C. HEDKVIST (Sweden), on behalf of the Scandinavian delegates, while agreeing with the resolution in its present form, considered that the word "rehabilitation" covered the whole field of discussion to be undertaken by the Conference, and thought that the substance of the resolution could have been dealt with under the headings of Employment and Economic Provision already provided for on the agenda.

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom), reminded the Conference that if this resolution were adopted as the keystone of future policy for blind welfare, it would be necessary to use persuasion in order to create in the minds of the general public a definite knowledge of the capabilities of the blind.

COLONEL BAKER (Canada), agreed that it was vitally necessary to convince the public of the ability and varied capacities of the blind, and persistent and effective publicity would be necessary.

HERR HEDKVIST (Sweden), emphasised that to enable blind people to hold their own in competition with the sighted they must receive a better training than sighted people.

MONSIEUR L. JACOT (Switzerland), Monsieur Balliste (France-Algeria), and Dr. Trapny (Austria), all supported the resolution.

MR. BOULTER, referring to the point of view put forward by the Scandinavian delegates, suggested that "readjustment" might be a better word than "rehabilitation," as it was meant to imply a person's adjustment to blindness in preparation for his training to participate in the normal life of the community.

MR. ANDERSON (United Kingdom), was not in agreement with splitting the resolution under Employment and Economic Provision. He felt that the resolution, as it stood, adequately covered the process of adjustment which must be applied to every blind person, and to the community in which he lived.

DR. STREHL (Germany), on behalf of the German delegation, while agreeing fully with the resolution, suggested that the word "rehabilitation" should be qualified, by inserting the words "readaptation" and "readjustment."

MONSIEUR GEORGES L. RAVERAT (Vice-Chairman of the Conference) (France), and Monsieur Salis (France) pointed out that "rehabilitation" was a difficult word to translate into French, and the words "readaptation" and "re-education" should be used to cover the subject under discussion.

MR. F. G. TINGEN (Holland), said that the word "rehabilitation" was also difficult to express in Dutch.

MR. E. H. GETLIFF (United Kingdom), called attention to the need of impressing Governments in all countries with the importance of providing comprehensively for the welfare of the blind, and encouraging the development of arrangements for ensuring their employment.

MR. MICHAEL J. SHORTLEY (U.S.A.), suggested that the following points should be considered :—

- (1) The provision of a physical restoration service to reduce or eliminate disablement.
- (2) The provision of a psychological service, to enable a good vocational diagnosis and plan to be formulated.
- (3) The provision of an information service, to acquaint the general public, Governments and employers with the efficiency of disabled persons.

PROFESSOR BENTIVOGLIO (Italy), asked if Cav. di Gr. Croce Dott. A. Nicolodi (Italy), could be included in the Drafting Committee for the resolution under discussion, as he was an authority on the subject in Italy. Professor Bentivoglio went on to state that he agreed with Monsieur Salis (France) that the words “re-education” and “readaptation” should be included. In Italy re-education was already compulsory, and it should be made compulsory in all countries.

It was emphasised by Mr. Tingen (Holland), Monsieur Balliste (France-Algeria), and Professor Bentivoglio (Italy), that the expense of rehabilitation should be borne by the State.

HERR HEDKVIST (Sweden), emphasised that employment should be the primary object of rehabilitation and training, and for that reason stressed that the second part of the resolution—concerning a plan for blind persons who cannot work—should be preceded by the words “When employment is not possible . . .”

The Chairman announced that the Drafting Committee would be composed of :—

MR. MICHAEL J. SHORTLEY (U.S.A.).

MONSIEUR A. SALIS (France).

MR. F. G. TINGEN (Holland).

CAV. DI GR. CROCE DOTT. A. NICOLODI (Italy).

HERR E. RETSLER (Sweden).

It was moved by Mr. Alfred Allen (U.S.A.), seconded by Mr. W. G. Askew (United Kingdom), and

RESOLVED

That the resolution under discussion be adopted in principle, on the understanding that the Drafting Committee would modify it in the light of the discussion.

(For Final Resolution on Rehabilitation and Training, see Page 140)

REHABILITATION AND TRAINING

Dr. Irwin introduced Mr. MICHAEL J. SHORTLEY, Executive Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency, Washington. Mr. Shortley had supervised the rehabilitation programmes for forty-eight states, and during the past three or four years great strides forward had been made under his direction.

Mr. Shortley then addressed the Conference as follows :—

“ Last night, at the British Council, there were shown some films which depicted the entire content of the Rehabilitation programme in the United States. There are also a number of pamphlets available for those who wish to have them.

“ To-day I was greatly interested in the resolution under discussion, and appreciate the opportunity to work with the Committee that has the responsibility for re-drafting that resolution. I am firmly convinced that the rehabilitation programme in the United States, or in any country in the world, will succeed only to the extent that there is legislative authority to provide *all* the necessary services to prepare disabled people for employment.

“ In the U.S.A., as far back as 1919, there was what was termed a Rehabilitation Programme. From 1919-1943, this programme was not very successful, because there was no authority to provide the services that I want to talk about to-night. Since 1943 we have been able to provide these services, and that is the reason why I was interested to get into the resolution some of these terms.

“ First of all, we believe that it is necessary to have a comprehensive medical diagnosis and prognosis as well as a vocational diagnosis. It would not be good business to prepare a disabled person (visually handicapped or otherwise) if the disability could be removed or reduced; hence the interest in a complete medical diagnosis. First, we want to know the full extent of the disablement, and secondly to take steps to eliminate as much of the disability as medical science can do. All too frequently you hear of finding jobs for the disabled, instead of laying stress on the proper preparation of the disabled for the job for which he has some native or natural talent or ability. Hence the need for vocational diagnosis.

“ Following these two steps, and while the physical restoration is being provided for during convalescence from the disease or injury, is the time to develop a special plan for the rehabilitation of the particular individual who has these disabilities and who has these abilities. Anyone with a handicap or disablement of any kind is in need of the best in the way of counsel and guidance, in the way of making certain that all the psychological knowledge

available is applied to his case, so that there will be utilised, in his preparation for employment, anything he has in the way of natural talent and natural ability. During the process of physical restoration and convalescence, counsel and guidance are provided and a plan is prepared, and only then is vocational training begun.

"Following the vocational training, is the placement in the employment for which the individual has been trained; not any job, but the job that he can do, and that he can do well. Even after this, the work is not finished, because it is necessary to realise that there are times when mistakes will be made; further training may be necessary, and, in some rare cases, changes in vocational diagnosis, so that the blind person can succeed. That is discovered in the follow-up period a few months following placement in employment, when it is learned whether or not training has been successful; whether or not the disabled individual has been properly prepared, and whether the job is satisfactory to him, and his work is satisfactory to the employer. In a number of instances, as you may have observed from the films shown last night, employers themselves have made studies of the success of disabled workers. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has made some studies, as well as State Agencies and private organisations, and usually it has been found that the accident ratio among rehabilitated workers is lower than among the general able-bodied population; attendance at work is better; in many instances production is higher; and generally, where the preparation has been successful, the employer is more satisfied with the efforts of the disabled person.

"That is the content of the U.S.A. Rehabilitation programme. The films have a double purpose. We believe that it is necessary for the general public, as well as the disabled, to know about the programme of rehabilitation; to know how well work is being done; and particularly we believe it is highly important that employers know how well the disabled are prepared for employment, so that there will be no hesitancy on their part in giving equal opportunity with the able-bodied."

"Last year 62,360 disabled men and women in the United States were prepared and placed in suitable employment. Of these, 53,131 (21 per cent more than the preceding year) were performing the jobs to their own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of employers. These cases were closed as rehabilitated. This is the largest number ever dealt with in the United States in one year. The remaining number had completed rehabilitation to the point where they were employed, but were being observed for a reasonable period, to make certain that their adjustment was complete. This represents a 20 per cent increase over the previous year. Another 3,796 were ready

for employment at the end of the year ; these had received the necessary counsel and guidance, physical restoration and training and other services required, and were waiting placement in suitable jobs.

“ The aggregate earnings of rehabilitated men and women increased approximately 400 per cent—from about seventeen million dollars before rehabilitation, to an annual rate of eighty-six million dollars during the first year after rehabilitation ; these figures do not include farmers or family workers, because it would be too difficult to determine their income. As a result of the greater earnings of these workers, the annual earned income of the nation increased by sixty-nine million dollars. The programme was operated at a total cost of about 460 dollars per rehabilitee. Last year brought the total of completed rehabilitation, for the five years since 1943, to 219,000 disabled men and women, and that figure compares with 210,000 rehabilitated during the preceding twenty-three years under the old programme. That means an average of 43,000 rehabilitations a year under our present law, as against 9,000 for the preceding period ; an increase of about 400 per cent.

“ During this same year complete rehabilitation was effected for 6,200 persons with serious visual handicaps ; of this group 2,569 were blind. This represents an increase of 19 per cent over the total for the preceding year, and that total for the preceding year was a 92 per cent increase over the 1946 figure. Our programme for the blind really did not get started until 1943, but recently I saw a figure for 1940 or 1941. The number of blind rehabilitated throughout the nation was 198 for one year.”

On the Chairman inviting questions, MR. S. W. STARLING (United Kingdom), asked if the speaker could give the period of employment enjoyed by those 2,569 persons who were placed ? Were there statistics to show whether those who were placed retained their jobs for long periods, or did a percentage fall by the wayside and have to revert to sheltered employment or some other form of employment ?

Mr. Shortley replied that there were a number of studies ; none had been conducted nationally, but in the State of New York, the year following rehabilitation, contact was made with the individual rehabilitated the year before. The record generally showed that the disabled person had earned advancement, either in position or salary, within the year. In the State of Michigan, where a study was made of some 400 disabled individuals who were taken from relief rolls, prepared for employment and placed in employment, it was found that, at the end of the first year, about 80 per cent were still working ; 20 per cent had become unemployable due to acute

illness, shut-downs and the severity of their disability. A number of scattered studies indicated, fully enough, that the process was successful and effective. He realised that eventually there would be studies made, and they would be promoted so that at the end of a five-year period it was known how the individuals had made out.

MR. GETLIFF (United Kingdom), asked what attitude was adopted by the authorities to the blind persons who ask for employment in sheltered industry, and do not wish to avail themselves of the possibilities of rehabilitation and placement in open industry.

Mr. Shortley replied that there were large numbers of blind persons in the workshops for the blind who had never gone through the process, but during the past two or three years more and more of the workshops were attuning their efforts to the point where State Rehabilitation Agencies might buy services from them which would assist them in giving higher standard and assisting their facilities. There was a general agreement between public and private agencies that, where the individual could be prepared for competitive industrial employment, this should be done, even if, after going through the rehabilitation process, it was found necessary to place in sheltered employment. They would never force anyone to go through the course of rehabilitation.

MR. ANDERSON (United Kingdom), asked whether rehabilitation were not necessary for any disabled person, whether that disabled person was intended for open employment, for sheltered employment or even for pastime employment? The feeling in Scotland was that rehabilitation was something required by every disabled person; it might even be required in schools, for the child who had been spoiled at home.

Mr. Shortley replied that this was so, if the individual had a substantial vocational handicap. All with such handicaps should be prepared for the type of employment for which they had some native abilities and in which their disablement would be the least possible handicap.

Mr. Anderson then suggested that the reverse situation might exist. A person might not be suitable for open employment although prepared for it, and might have to pass to sheltered employment. He thought that we must not regard rehabilitation as something new that will lead us from something that is proven to something that is not yet fully proven. As one who had some claim to lay psychological experience and knowledge, he felt that the emotional upsets arising from severe disablement, taking into account war and economic record, might be such as to make open employment unsuitable. They must not allow rehabilitation to be attached only to open employment.

Mr. Shortley said that he would prefer to make a mistake on the side of attempting to prepare an individual for industrial competitive employment, and after the experiments with the individual find it could not be done, than merely to provide for the sheltered shop.

The Chairman then asked MR. ASKEW (United Kingdom) to tell the Conference something about the rehabilitation of the war blinded.

Mr. Askew said : " St. Dunstan's is responsible for the training, settlement and life-long after-care of men and women of Great Britain blinded on war service. We have always attached great importance to beginning rehabilitation at the earliest possible moment after blinding. When the second world war broke out we set up, adjacent to our Training Centre, our own small hospital, and we were fortunate in being able to make arrangements with the Army, Navy and Air Force for men and women, suffering from a disability which threatened blindness, to be transferred there so soon as they were fit to travel. This plan worked well, as we were able, not only to provide expert surgical skill, which gave many persons useful sight and took them out of the blind category, but were enabled to commence the rehabilitation of the blinded concurrently with the continuing treatment they required for their war wounds.

" Incidentally, a number of the men who visited the patients in the hospital and assisted with their rehabilitation were the blinded veterans of World War I ; that, I think you will agree, was important, both psychologically and otherwise.

" One of the first things we did was to hand to each blinded person a Braille watch, and to explain that blindness was not the devastating handicap he possibly thought it was. He commenced instruction in Braille and typewriting, and as soon as the surgeon told us that he was fit to be transferred to the Training Centre, he was able to take his part in the full life of the Centre. He went into the Joinery Shop ; not because he was going to be turned into a carpenter, but so that he could realise at a very early stage in his rehabilitation that he could still do a number of things about the house that he had done whilst sighted. He attended discussion groups. We were able to get a number of girls from the village to come in and act as dancing partners. He played darts, dominoes and cards, and used the rifle range. During the rehabilitation period, the staff would discuss with him his future, and at the appropriate time there would be a talk between the various members of the staff, and they, with him, would decide on the course of training he should follow. That was the course we were able to follow during the war, and for about eighteen months after. Then the numbers

coming to us began to dwindle so that we could not maintain a hospital, although, of course, our Training Centre is continuing.

" I mentioned that we are responsible for the life-long after-care of war-blinded persons. St. Dunstan's now cares for 2,147 blinded men and women in Great Britain. (There is also an organisation in Scotland, responsible for a small number of war-blinded residing in Scotland, but St. Dunstan's does not include in the figure of 2,147 the blinded cared for by that organisation). The delegates may like to hear in terms of percentages what is happening to those 2,147 people ; 1,455 of that number were blinded in World War I, and 692 in World War II. Of the total number, 7 per cent are still in training ; 5 per cent are following a professional career ; 5 per cent are physiotherapists ; 8 per cent are telephone operators and shorthand-typists ; 10 per cent are factory operators ; 6 per cent are in charge of small shops (mainly selling tobacco and confectionery) ; 7 per cent are smallholders (with a bias on poultry-keeping) ; 28 per cent are following home crafts such as basket-making, rug-making, joinery and mat-making ; 24 per cent are non-workers. The average age of the men blinded in World War I is $57\frac{1}{2}$, and of the 52 per cent made up of home-workers and non-workers, 46 per cent are veterans of World War I, many of whom are well over 60 years of age."

MONSIEUR P. GUINOT (France), asked Mr. Shortley the following questions :—

- (1) Among the blind people being occupied, were there some who were born blind, and some who had become blind ?
- (2) Had tests been made on each of the individuals who had been chosen for rehabilitation ?
- (3) Had the tests, if made, established the subject for which the individual would be best fitted ?

Mr. Shortley replied that :—

- (1) Some of the people had been blind from birth, others had become blind in the later years of life ; the exact percentage was not available. The average age of rehabilitees in the 1948 figures was 31.
- (2) Tests were not applied in every single case, but operators of the rehabilitation programme were constantly urged to carry out tests.
- (3) The information that came from the application of the test was utilised in determining the job objective of the disabled person.

DR. STREHL (Germany) pointed out the difficulties of employment when industry was not working to its full extent, as in Germany at the present time. They looked forward to the time when industry

would be back to normal, and then it might be possible to place all blind people in open industry.

PROFESSOR BENTIVOGLIO (Italy), gave a few details of the work of rehabilitation and training in Italy.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Shortley said that every disabled man who made a success at a job of work was the best advertisement for the rehabilitation programme in any country. For successful employment it was necessary to utilise all the scientific and professional knowledge available, to help the blind individual to use all his natural abilities and talents.

Fifth Session

Saturday Morning, 6th August, 1949

ECONOMIC PROVISION

The Chairman for the Session, Monsieur Raverat (U.S.A.), called on DR. IRWIN (U.S.A.), to present the following Resolution on Economic Provision :—

That each nation should provide its blind citizens with at least a minimum standard of subsistence, taking into account the special expenses resulting from blindness. Special economic provision should be made for all blind persons, while insuring that the incentive to work, and to contribute in other ways to the economic and social life of the community, is in no way impaired. Such special provisions for the blind may be embodied in a general programme of social security, or may be expressly made for the blind. Blind taxpayers should be granted some remission of taxes to offset in part their extra cost of living.

Dr. Irwin said that the resolution was divided into several parts. Blind people should be assured at least of a minimum standard of living, and it should be recognised that the blind had special expenses which their seeing fellows did not ; *e.g.*, a blind person was largely restricted in his movements without the services of a guide ; there were difficulties in finding a suitable place in which to live ; a blind person's house must be situated so that he could get to his work easily. In the U.S.A. it was considered that it cost a blind person as much to live as it would if he had a dependent.

Aid or relief should be administered in such a way as not to remove the incentive to work. In many countries, including the

U.S.A., a blind person was given a certain amount on which to live. If he earned a little by casual work, that amount was immediately taken off his allowance, and this naturally discouraged him from working. It was important to stress that, in order that the needs of the blind should not be overlooked, their assistance should be included in any social welfare programme, or, if it were not so included, that there should be a separate Act extending provision to the blind.

The resolution under discussion further recommended that there should be a special remission of taxes to the blind. In some countries blind people were excused from certain taxes (*e.g.*, on their homes or in respect of rent and secretarial expenses), and it was felt that there was a very good case for pressing for such remission.

HERR JORGENSEN (Denmark), on behalf of the Scandinavian delegations, emphasised the need to give monetary compensation for the special expenses incurred by blindness. This should be granted without any means test. He felt that this would be the best encouragement that could be given to a blind person when being rehabilitated. Blind people must not only exist—they must live. It was possible that measures like this for the blind might be overlooked in the general programme of social security being adopted in so many countries to-day. Whatever assistance was given should not take away the incentive to work.

The Scandinavian delegations objected to the recommendation to grant remission of taxes, on the ground that everyone should do his duty in this respect. They felt that it was not practicable to give compensation for blindness and remission of taxes as well. They did not want any sort of segregation in this respect—they wanted to be equal to anyone else. They felt, however, that if other countries were in favour of pressing for a remission of taxes for the blind, that need not be included in the resolution to be passed that morning.

The Scandinavian delegates further desired to urge that before the Conference ended, a permanent International Organisation should be set up, to follow up its work, and to act as a permanent nucleus of international co-operation in welfare of the blind.

MONSIEUR GUINOT (France), said that the place the blind person was to hold in social welfare must be the place which he himself made by his own efforts. He had not the same facilities, however, as the seeing person, and therefore some compensation should be made to him. This could only be made by the State. A step in this direction had been made in France by the Order of July 3rd, 1945, which provided, *inter alia*, that financial help should be given as compensation. He put forward the plea that associations for the blind should benefit from the Marshall Plan.

He cordially supported the proposals made by the Scandinavian delegates for the formation of a permanent International Organisation.

MR. GETLIFF (United Kingdom), said that the Conference should do everything to ensure that a blind person's standard of living was not adversely affected by the single factor of blindness. The approach to this particular resolution would appear to fall into three sections :—

- (1) economic provision necessary for a blind child ;
- (2) economic provision necessary for the blind adult worker ;
- (3) provision for the older age group unable to work.

The first two groups were now covered by legislation. Under the National Assistance Act of 1948, a blind person's handicap was recognised by a grant of approximately 15s. per week additional to grants made under the social welfare schemes to sighted people. No special remission of taxes to blind persons was made, except that augmentation of earnings paid to blind workshop employees was free from tax. Much of the advance made in the position of the blind had been due to the efforts of the blind themselves, and he hoped that this Conference, when passing any resolution on this particular point, would agree that the maintenance of the improved economic status of the blind would largely depend on the way in which the blind throughout the world accepted that improvement, and the responsibilities which came with it.

COLONEL BAKER (Canada) stated that in Canada the adult blind were divided into three groups :—

- (1) Those incapable of work because of age or extreme infirmity.
- (2) Those who were marginal workers (*i.e.*, part-time workers).
- (3) Those in the fully employable class.

For the first group a reasonable subsistence was provided through allowances for the blind, and both the Canadian Government and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind were in agreement on this provision. For the second group, a form of assistance which would ensure a reasonable standard of living, and at the same time avoid discouragement of personal effort, was being sought.

Colonel Baker thought it essential to encourage every possible means of finding and developing the talents of each blind individual. He objected to the means test.

On the question of income tax, he stated that in Canada a blind person was allowed a certain amount without income tax to cover the extra expense of blindness. No account was taken of any extra amount which a blind person might be able to earn.

He stressed the fact that the blind had suffered too much from misconceptions for too many years, and emphasised that those who were working in the best interests of the blind should first agree on what was really in their best interests and most likely to encourage them to personal effort.

The Chairman announced that the Drafting Committee would be composed as follows :—

MONSIEUR P. GUINOT (France).

HERR E. JORGENSEN (Denmark).

CAV. DI GR. CROCE DOTT. A. NICOLODI (Italy).

MR. E. H. GETLIFF (United Kingdom).

PROFESSOR DR. C. STREHL (Germany).

COLONEL E. A. BAKER (Canada).

MONSIEUR BALLISTE (France-Algeria), asked whether this Conference could put forward a recommendation to the International Association when formed, that all countries with overseas territories should extend their legislation to such territories.

LT.-COL. SIR CLUTHA MACKENZIE (U.N.E.S.C.O.), suggested that delegates might find it worth while to ask the Office of the Government of New Zealand to supply them with a resumé of the New Zealand Social Security Act. The provisions for the blind begun in New Zealand in 1924 covered extra payments as an incentive to work, and while the means test had not been abolished, the allowances were extremely generous. Although the blind welfare system in New Zealand was by no means perfect, it had made a considerable advance toward what many of the delegates present were aiming at.

DR. STREHL (Germany), on behalf of the German delegation, stated that the resolution should ask for a certain augmentation for the blind to compensate their blindness, but that facilities for placement should be foremost, and then compensation should be granted as a right. As regards taxes in Germany, allowances were given for professional expenses.

He pressed for compensation to be given to all persons over 18 years, for a remission of taxes, and for help from the Marshall Plan towards the productive work of the blind.

He expressed thanks to the American Foundation for Overseas Blind for all the help they were giving to the German blind.

DR. IRWIN, in summing up the discussion, stated that although most of the points raised would appear to be covered by the resolution as worded, it should doubtless be redrafted, so as to bring out these points more clearly. He thought that the wording "remission of taxes" was perhaps unfortunate, and that "recognition of the special expenses of blindness in determining taxes" might be better. He would refer to the question of aid from the Marshall Plan at a

later meeting. Regarding the International Committee or Organisation to put forward the adoption of recommendations made at the Conference throughout the world, the suggestion would be put to the United Nations Organisation, and a resolution on this subject presented to the Conference at a later Session. The Organising Committee would be glad to hear the views of any individuals interested in this matter.

(For Final Resolution on Economic Provision, see Page 142).

Sixth Session

Monday Morning, 8th August, 1949

On MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom), informing the Conference of the generous gift of food made by the American Foundation for Overseas Blind to augment supplies at the College, it was unanimously resolved that a hearty vote of thanks be passed to the Foundation for its generous gift.

The Chairman referred to the importance of having a correct translation into French of the resolutions passed by the Conference, and reported that a Committee, composed of the following, had been appointed to undertake this work :—

MONSIEUR G. BORRÉ (Belgium).

DR. E. SPAHR (Switzerland).

DR. DOLANSKI (Poland).

CAPTAIN QUAGLIOTTI (Italy).

MONSIEUR D. LELIÈVRE (France).

The Chairman reported that Monsieur Henri Laugier, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General in charge of Social Affairs, had, unfortunately, been unable to attend the Conference owing to the unexpected prolongation of certain meetings of the Economic and Social Council at Geneva, and that Monsieur Maurice Milhaud, Head of the Social Activities Service, European Office of the United Nations, Palais des Nations, Geneva, was attending in his place. Monsieur Milhaud had now arrived, and on behalf of the Organising Committee he extended a cordial welcome to him.

MONSIEUR MILHAUD replied as follows :—

“ Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen : I have the honour, as an observer, to represent at this Conference the Secretary-General of the United Nations. M. Laugier, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Social Affairs, who hoped to take part personally in your deliberations, has been prevented from so doing, owing to the prolongation of the present session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva. But when I left him on Saturday evening he

asked me to tell you how much interested he is in the problems which you are endeavouring to solve, in order to help the blind to become active members of our human community.

“ The United Nations have set themselves certain objectives in the social field ; and lower objectives than these would be unworthy of our age. Their aim is, on the one hand, to raise the standard of living, by the full use of man power and natural resources, as well as by a fair distribution of the national wealth, through such means as progressive measures of social security. And, on the other hand, to offer to the handicapped members of our society the means to remedy, so far as possible, their physical or moral defects, and to find outlets which will give them self-confidence, and make them citizens conscious of their usefulness to society.

“ To-day the wonderful progress of science and technology should enable this twofold aim to be achieved in ever-increasing measure. The development of welfare is possible, thanks to the tremendous increase of productivity, and the variety of goods which can be made available to modest purses. The consequences of human infirmity could be lessened, thanks to the universal application of the most recent medical discoveries which, in your sphere, can lead to the recovery of sight for certain types of blindness. They could also be lessened, thanks to the invention and distribution of increasingly ingenious apparatus or new devices, which open up undreamed-of horizons to the incapacitated, alike in the field of education, of professional training, of productive work and of leisure.

“ The task of the United Nations and that of men of good-will like yourselves, is to make sure of these marvellous achievements of man's brain (our common heritage), for the increase of the well-being of society as a whole, and to give effective aid to certain groups of the population. The achievement of peace, and the achievement of social justice !

“ The progressive realisation of this programme is one of the hopes which public opinion reposes in the work of the Economic and Social Council, in the Commission on Social Questions, which has as its duty the giving of advice on such problems, and in the specialised agencies of the United Nations. It is the function of the Division of Social Activities at Lake Success, of which Sir Raphael Cilento is Director, to act as the Secretariat of the Commission on Social Questions, and to direct the necessary research.

“ Side by side with measures designed for the improvement of the lot of humanity as a whole, raising of the standard of living, improvement in housing, the well-being of families, the natural development of childhood and adolescence, the Commission on Social Questions is concerned with special groups, which must be the

objects of comprehensive and compensatory action. This includes efforts to remove the causes of evil, and to make possible moral readjustment. These efforts are aimed at dealing with the problems of prostitution and delinquency, by replacing repression with re-education ; with the ultimate purpose of permitting the maximum play of personality to as many as possible of those who, because of their disabilities, have in the past been regarded as a burden on the community, and been treated with indifference or as outcasts.

" No doubt it will fall to me later to give you some details of certain steps now being taken by the United Nations*, but at this moment I particularly want you to know that the United Nations will follow with interest the proceedings of experts devoted to a great cause. It is my earnest wish that you will be able, during the course of this Conference, to make a useful contribution to the efforts which must be energetically pursued on the international plane in the sphere of blind welfare."

The Chairman thanked Monsieur Milhaud for his address and invited him to join fully in the discussions.

* See Appendix I.

EMPLOYMENT (A)

The Chairman called on MR. JOSEPH F. CLUNK (U.S.A.), to present the resolution as follows :—

That every practicable means should be used to make generally known, and to impress upon legislators, administrators, and the general public, that many blind persons are capable of fully economic production in factories and offices, and that many of them are competent to follow certain professions. Employers and others concerned should be urged not to refuse employment to blind persons simply on the ground of blindness.

Mr. Clunk said that the question of the employment of blind persons was approached too often with the question, " What can a blind person do ? " The best way was to decide what functions in such-and-such an occupation required sight, and whether there were enough functions in the occupation to provide a full-time job for a blind person, as apart from those which would be performed by his sighted companion. If a farmer became blind it was not necessary to teach him how to farm, but he needed to be taught how to do the various jobs on the farm which did not require sight. It was a matter of mechanical adaptation, and of adopting new manual methods. In many of the professions (*e.g.*, law, business, government and other administration, etc.), sight was not required for certain of the operations and practices performed.

Extra reading that was necessary should be supplied by a clerk or stenographer, who would be employed even if the blind person were sighted. The requirements for the employment of a blind person were the same as those required for a sighted person, *i.e.*, intelligence, manual dexterity, re-education, the desire to work, and ability to stay on the job. The blind person was able to concentrate on his job to a greater degree than the sighted man, and therefore had an advantage in this respect. A sighted business man hired book-keepers, accountants, sales people, etc., and a blind person could do exactly the same. Mr. Clunk said that he had always been convinced that it was a mistake to say that a blind person could only work in an occupation in which he worked alone. He thought that workers for the blind, rather than the individual blind person or the general public, were sometimes the people who most lacked confidence in the abilities of the blind.

He emphasised that there was no need to talk about the limitations of blind persons. It was important that those in charge of placement should have a complete knowledge of the jobs in which placement was to be made, and it was equally important that the blind person placed should be a good example of the employable blind. The sighted public must be protected against the impression that blind people could not do the job. The employment of the blind in every country was in proportion to the confidence which could be placed in blind people, and the energy with which their placement was made.

MR. J. F. WILSON (Assistant Secretary of the National Institute for the Blind, London), who attended this Session of the Conference, emphasised the fact that a programme of work for the blind could only be maintained by the performance of the blind themselves in the economic field. He suggested that the morning Session could be divided into three sections. The first was industrial employment ; in the United Kingdom a certain amount of experience of this work had been gained during the last few years, and during the war some 2,000 blind persons had been placed in employment, on work not previously performed by the blind. The efficiency of placement in open industry depended on the right method of selecting the blind, and the employment of the right kind of placement officer. The conclusion had been reached that the most effective results had been secured by employing blind or near-blind placement officers.

The second point covered employment in the rural areas. This was a subject to which more attention should be paid. When a person living in the country lost his sight, he did not want to be told that he must take a job in the town. The happiness of blind people

depended on their ability to go on working in their own home towns.

The third section covered commercial or professional placement, and should be given priority. In the United Kingdom the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act imposed on all large employers the duty to engage a percentage of disabled workers, including the blind. There was no country in the world where placement was not possible. Given the right kind of training, and given the courage, a blind man could make a success of his job. It was the duty of the community of every country to see that every blind man was given the chance to earn his living.

MONSIEUR SALIS (France), asked whether, in view of the fact that blind people had their limitations and were bound by them, it would not be possible to relate this resolution to the resolution on Rehabilitation and Training, as they were inseparable. He also suggested that the United Nations Organisation, or possibly U.N.E.S.C.O., should be asked to sub-title in all languages the film on rehabilitation recently shown to the delegates ; in many countries this means of access to the public mind would be much appreciated, particularly in industrial circles.

The Chairman agreed to refer this suggestion to the Organising Committee for consideration.

DR. FARRELL (U.S.A.), expressed the opinion that a little more stress should be laid on the spirit behind the resolution. It should be brought out that a blind person could do a great many things and fill a great many jobs, and the public should be able to judge such a person by the abilities he possessed. It would be necessary to find ways in which the conviction of a blind person's capabilities could be transferred to the general public so that employers could employ blind people with confidence.

CAPTAIN QUAGLIOTTI (Italy), on behalf of Cav. di Gr. Croce Dott. NICOLODI (Italy), explained that in Italy the question of employment of blind persons was very difficult. There were at present so many sighted Italians unemployed that it was not easy for blind people to obtain employment in open industry ; the only solution lay in re-starting the factories, developed by the Italian Union of the Blind for the sole purpose of employing blind people, which had to be closed during the war. Nevertheless, the Italian Union would prefer that blind workers should be employed in the open market rather than in sheltered industry, if this were possible.

MR. TINGEN (Holland) put forward two points for consideration and inclusion in the resolution :—

- (1) That work for the blind everywhere should be performed by the blind themselves.

- (2) That there should be a special service for placing the blind, apart from any service for placing other handicapped persons.

COLONEL BAKER (Canada), stated that it was important to recognise the extent of the preparation of both the individual to be placed, and of the prospective employer. There were two groups of blind employees : those from schools for the blind, and those who lost their sight in adult life. The first group had lived a more or less sheltered life and had not always experience of mixing with sighted members of the community. It was most essential for both groups to have the appropriate adjustment of mental and social outlook, as well as physical conditioning, to stand up to a full day's work. It was equally essential to adjust the outlook both of the prospective employer and of the foreman of the department in which the blind person would be placed. This preparation of employer and employee should also be strengthened by the provision of after-care facilities. Any failure on the part of a blind person to succeed would be damaging to the whole cause of the blind.

THE CHAIRMAN, in agreeing with Colonel Baker's remarks, referred also to the need to include the general public with the employers in the matter of adjusting their outlook on the question of employment of blind persons.

DR. DOLANSKI (Poland), explained the procedure in Poland, where the Ministry of Labour organised courses of training for blind people for work in factories, and appointed inspectors in each district to undertake placement work for the blind.

MONSIEUR BALLISTE (France-Algeria), thought it was important to try and persuade the Governments of all countries to employ blind people, and it would seem that here again it was necessary to call upon the help of U.N.O. He expressed appreciation of what the United Nations Organisation had already done, and was doing, for the blind.

DR. SPAHR (Switzerland), referred to the ideas he had obtained while visiting America, and the development of placement work for the blind in Switzerland which had resulted.

HERR F. GEPPL (Austria), on behalf of Herr L. Bick (Austria), said that in Austria there was a law by which employment of disabled persons was secured, and employers gave jobs to a certain percentage of blind persons. This regulation, however, was sometimes applied to war-disabled persons only, with the result that the civilian blind might be dismissed in favour of the war-blind. He urged that legislation should be sought in all countries to ensure the employment of all blind persons.

DR. STREHL (Germany), on behalf of the German delegation, agreed with the suggestions put forward, and stressed the need to remove the prejudice which existed amongst sighted employers regarding the employment of the blind. He also urged that occupations should be found other than traditional blind handicrafts. In Germany a way must be found for blind associations to erect factories for the employment of blind people.

He suggested that the A.F.B. might try to call together a World Conference, not only of blind associations and organisations, but of the leading centres of the different governments and the organisations of the Labour Unions. At such a conference it might be possible to dispel the prejudices that still existed against blind people as workers.

MR. STARLING (United Kingdom), asked how placement of the blind was to be carried out ; he urged that arrangements should be made whereby the right person would be trained to undertake placement work so as to get the best possible results from this service.

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom), said that the N.I.B. had selected a team of 12 blind or near-blind placement officers, who were doing effective placement work.

MR. CLUNK then summed up the discussion. He said that it was apparent that in addition to the training of the individual, it was necessary to educate the attitude of the public towards the blind worker. He emphasised the necessity to advertise in every possible way the successful performance of blind persons in all types of occupation. There must be no idea that blind persons could only work in special workshops operated by the State. Mr. Clunk further stated that he thought that one agent could only place, and keep placed, about 100 blind persons in industry.

The Chairman announced that the Drafting Committee would be composed as follows :—

COLONEL E. A. BAKER (Canada).

MR. F. G. TINGEN (Holland).

CAV. DI GR. CROCE DOTT. A. NICHOLODI, or CAPTAIN G. QUAGLIOTTI (Italy).

MONSIEUR A. SALIS (France).

DR. E. SPAHR (Switzerland).

PROFESSOR DR. C. STREHL (Germany).

(For Final Resolution on Employment (A), see Page 141).

EMPLOYMENT (B)

The Chairman called on MR. STARLING (United Kingdom), to present the resolution as follows :—

“That for blind persons who are not capable of fully economic employment there should be provided :—

- (1) Special “sheltered” workshops, in which productive wages were supplemented to a recognised level of subsistence.
- (2) Organised systems for the employment of blind persons in their own homes, which supplemented the economic earnings of industrious and competent workers to a recognised level of subsistence.
- (3) Preferential marketing arrangements, *e.g.*, the purchase at a fair price by public authorities of the products of special workshops and home industries.”

Mr. Starling said that it would be seen by the answers to the questionnaire that in every country workshops had been established, and although it might be supposed that workshops in one country were very much like those in another, it was necessary to be clear as to what was meant by a “sheltered” workshop. It was not an organisation set up for the purpose of providing pastime or recreative employment, but a workshop such as would be found in any branch of industry, except that its personnel consisted of blind rather than sighted workers, and only those blind persons who were fully trained were employed. The wages paid for the work done were in accord with those paid in ordinary industry for the same sort of work ; the subsistence rate must be a matter for settlement between the workshop and the Government.

The second part of the resolution did not refer to the person engaged in a pastime job, but to the person who, through circumstances, was forced to work at home, and the qualifications for such employment were the same as those which applied to employment in the workshops ; the blind person must be fully trained and employed under a recognised scheme, properly supervised.

Referring to the third part of the resolution, he emphasised the necessity of doing everything possible in the way of developing markets, before asking for preferential treatment from the Government. The question of price could be adjusted between the workshops and the public authorities ; it must be borne in mind that the market price was determined by machine-made goods, and every

endeavour should be made to reduce the cost of articles made by the blind.

MONSIEUR GUINOT (France), agreed with the terms of the resolution. In France those who worked at home were highly qualified artisans who needed no supervision; the less qualified workers were employed in workshops.

Speaking of preferential marketing arrangements, he said that he would like to see the trades and professions open to the blind reserved to them; for instance he would like the blind to have the monopoly of the brush industry.

Addressing himself to the representative of the United Nations Organisation, Monsieur Guinot emphasised that one of the ideals of that Organisation was to redistribute the goods of the earth with greater justice and equality; he would translate this to mean that suitable trades and professions for the blind should be reserved to them, so as to bring their whole standard up to a degree of dignity as yet unknown.

HERR HEDKVIST (Sweden), speaking on behalf of Herr Retsler (Sweden), said that it had already been agreed in previous Sessions that the blind should receive allowances in compensation for blindness in order that they might have a reasonable standard of living; the Scandinavian delegates felt that, by asking for too many allowances, the spirit of the work might be destroyed. They considered that the allowance to ensure a reasonable standard of living covered the question of subsistence mentioned in the first part of the resolution. They would like the first and second parts of the resolution so drafted as to stress the fact that those who could not be economically employed should be allowed to work, and so by their own efforts they could reach a higher standard than was provided by the general allowance. He concluded by asking what was meant by a "fair price." Did that mean fair to the buyer, or the seller?

MR. J. O'KEEFFE (Eire), said that whilst he was in full agreement with the general terms of the resolution, he felt that certain modifications were necessary. He advocated the necessity of obtaining the full co-operation and co-ordination of the employing agencies, and went on to query the interpretation of "subsistence level"; pointing out that this varied even with individual countries. For his part, he would be prepared to accept a level of subsistence based upon the current wages paid to manual municipal workers.

PROFESSOR BENTIVOGLIO (Italy), stated that he felt the subject of sheltered workshops should be treated with caution. Although he was not opposed to such workshops, he thought it better not to emphasise them too much in the public mind, as their function might be misunderstood. He also thought that sheltered workshops should

be reserved for the lower grades of blind workers. Although he saw little hope at present of achieving the aim outlined by Monsieur Guinot, he too would like to see the blind granted the monopoly of industries which could be undertaken by them. He concluded by saying how pleased he was to see a representative of the United Nations Organisation present ; he would like a phrase inserted in one of the resolutions, to the effect that U.N.O. should recognise the improvement of conditions for blind workers not only as a moral obligation, but as a matter of industrial benefit for the country, and an integral part of the great task of reconstruction.

THE CHAIRMAN then outlined the present position in the United States. He said that sheltered workshops were often hampered by lack of customers to buy enough of their products to keep their employees constantly busy. A few years ago a law was passed whereby the Federal Government was required to purchase certain commodities from workshops for the blind at a fair market price. A Committee, composed of representatives of the Army, the Navy and other large purchasing departments, as well as private citizens familiar with the needs of the blind, was appointed to determine which commodities should be purchased from the workshops, and also what constituted a fair market price. At the moment there were about eighteen such commodities, including brooms, mops and pillow cases, all of which had to be made to certain specifications. The fair market price was determined by taking the average of the prices obtained from various commercial firms which were asked to tender. The Federal Government had purchased some forty million dollars' worth of commodities from the workshops for the blind in the last ten years.

MR. STARLING, summing up the points made by the various delegates during the discussion, said that it was evident that sheltered workshops, on the lines indicated, should be established, and that some form of supplement to wages should be provided, as an integral part of blind welfare services.

The Chairman announced that the following delegates were appointed to the Drafting Committee :—

HERR E. RETSLER (Sweden).

with HERR C. HEDKVIST (Sweden).

MR. S. W. STARLING (United Kingdom).

MONSIEUR P. GUINOT (France).

HERR H. POTHMANN (Germany).

(For Final Resolution on Employment (B) see Page 141).

PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

THE CHAIRMAN, in opening the discussion, stated that one of the most important objectives of this Conference would be to present to the United Nations, or the appropriate section of that body, the conclusions arrived at, as a programme to be accepted by the United Nations and put into effect throughout the world. The most effective way to achieve that object was to elect a Committee, whose function would be to present the resolutions to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation. Many of the delegates present had been discussing informally the setting up of an International Committee on Blind Welfare, representing at least the countries taking part in the Conference, and it would seem desirable that if such a Committee were appointed, it should also be charged with the responsibility of laying the resolutions of the Conference before the United Nations.

HERR JORGENSEN (Denmark), in supporting the proposal, referred to the experience which had been gained through conferences which had established a closer contact between the Scandinavian countries, and stated that a permanent International Committee for the blind of the world as a whole would help in many practical ways. For instance, the formation of a Bureau of Information would keep countries informed of developments in blind welfare in other parts of the world, and particularly in the case of apparatus and appliances for the blind, the interchange of ideas might result in the standardisation of certain types of apparatus, with consequent reduction in cost. He suggested that a Planning Committee should be formed, to consider the action required to set up such an International Committee.

MONSIEUR H. AMBLARD (France), was in full agreement with the proposition, and suggested that a bulletin, newspaper or periodical report might be issued by the International Committee. Arrangements should be made immediately to set up such a Committee, if only on a temporary basis, in order to ensure the continuity of the work being done by the Conference. He expressed his gratification at the attendance of representatives of U.N.O. and U.N.E.S.C.O.

MR. T. H. SMITH (United Kingdom), suggested that there were two propositions to be considered. First, the setting up of a Committee to make the appropriate representations, if possible, to U.N.O., in order to persuade the Governments of the various countries represented at this Conference to put its

resolutions into effect; and, secondly, the formulation of a programme for an International Organisation which would be acceptable to all.

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom), reminded the delegates that a similar proposition had been made in 1931 at the New York Conference, and that it had been found impracticable to carry out, owing to financial and other difficulties. It was obvious that a Committee must be formed to make sure that the purpose of the Conference was implemented by action with U.N.O. It would be futile for the Conference to consider a minimum programme, without taking the necessary steps to carry it to its conclusion. The Organising Committee had already provided on the agenda for discussion of the action to be taken to secure international acceptance of this programme.

The point now to be considered was how the wish of the delegates to form some permanent central organisation, to enable them to keep in close contact with each other, could be implemented. No international organisation for the blind existed at present. The only organisation approaching an international character was the American Foundation for Overseas Blind. If it were possible for that Foundation to be converted, as it were, into a general International Organisation, that would provide a practical programme to be considered.

THE CHAIRMAN said that the A.F.O.B. was a comparatively small organisation when considering the needs of the blind of the whole world, but it was planning to extend its activities, and if an International Committee were set up, and the A.F.O.B. were affiliated to it, the Foundation's activities would be more effective. On the question of funds, the Chairman thought that these should be forthcoming from the countries represented on the organisation, and that if they proved inadequate, the A.F.O.B. would probably be able to give some assistance in this respect. He suggested that a Committee might be appointed to go into the proposal, and report back before the Conference ended.

MR. O'KEEFFE (Eire), expressed appreciation of the Chairman's offer of assistance from the A.F.O.B., but felt sure that all countries represented would not expect the A.F.O.B. to shoulder all the responsibility. His country at any rate would be willing to pay its share. He hoped that the resolutions passed by this Conference would form the basis of a charter of liberty or social freedom for the blind throughout the world.

HERR JORGENSEN (Denmark), proposed that a Planning Committee, of perhaps seven members, should be appointed immediately

to discuss preliminary arrangements, so that a meeting might be held before the Conference ended.

DR. FARRELL (U.S.A.) seconded Herr Jorgensen's proposal, and endorsed the Chairman's assurances of the help which the A.F.O.B. would be willing to give. He stressed, however, that the Foundation would not wish to assume the leadership in implementing the proposal, but would be ready to serve and help in any way it could. He realised the need for a realistic outlook in the matter of finance; the provision of secretarial assistance, and a centre from which to work, would be an important step towards planning the organisation which was desired.

MONSIEUR GUINOT (France), stated that there were a number of problems to be discussed, and proposed that a Committee should be formed to draft a resolution on the preliminary action to be taken, with particular reference to the financial aspect. He thought that it would be advisable to consult other countries not represented at the Conference.

MONSIEUR MILHAUD (United Nations), explained the relationship between the proposed International Committee and U.N.O., provided for by Article 71 of the Charter, which reads as follows :—

“The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organisations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organisations and, where appropriate, with national organisations, after consultation with the member of the United Nations concerned.”

In explaining the principles applied by the Council of the United Nations in granting consultative status, Monsieur Milhaud said that an organisation must be “concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Economic and Social Council with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters”; its aims and purposes “should be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.” It should not have been “proved to be discredited by past collaboration in Fascist activities, it should be of recognised standing and should represent a substantial proportion of the organised persons within the particular interest field in which it operated,” it “should have authority to speak for its members through its authorised representatives,” and “should be international in structure, with members who exercised voting rights.”

SIR CLUTHA MACKENZIE (U.N.E.S.C.O.), referred to the relationship which would exist between the International Committee and the United Nations Organisations and U.N.E.S.O. He went on to

express the best wishes of the Director General of U.N.E.S.C.O. for the success of the Conference. He hoped that the needs of the vast numbers of blind people in Asia, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere might soon be studied on an international scale, and that consideration might be given at the Conference to the problem of formulating an International Braille Code for non-European areas. Sir Clutha Mackenzie paid tribute to the assistance which the National Institute for the Blind and the A.F.O.B. had already given to forward work for the blind in Asia. He agreed wholeheartedly with the proposal to form an International Committee, and was most anxious that the large numbers of blind people in the East should benefit from international consultations.

THE CHAIRMAN, in summing up the discussion, stated that it would appear that the Conference was in favour of setting up a Planning Committee, to be followed later by a permanent Committee which might look forward to a more ambitious permanent Organisation. It was moved by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), seconded by Mr. Anderson (United Kingdom), and

RESOLVED unanimously :

That a Planning Committee be appointed to work out, in conjunction with the Organising Committee, a plan for a more permanent Committee to be selected before the Conference adjourns.

It was further RESOLVED :

That the following delegates be appointed to serve on the Planning Committee :—

HERR E. JORGENSEN (Denmark).

MR. J. O'KEEFFE (Eire).

MONSIEUR P. GUINOT (France).

CAV. DI GR. CROCE DOTT. A. NICOLODI (Italy).

COLONEL E. A. BAKER (Canada).

DR. V. DOLANSKI (Poland).

DR. R. WINTER (Germany).

(For Resolution on International Organisation, see Page 146)

CARE OF THE BLIND AT HOME

The Chairman called on COLONEL BAKER (Canada), to present the resolution as follows :—

That regular visiting of the blind in their homes, particularly those leading lonely lives, should be provided by the development of a system of home visiting and teaching services, with at least a nucleus of fully qualified and trained personnel; the object of the work being to assist in the adjustment of newly-blinded persons, and to provide blind persons at home with instruction, occupation and friendship.

Colonel Baker said that this was one of the most important subjects under discussion. Its importance was based on the fact that in the registered group of blind persons in any country, approximately 80 per cent lost their eyesight in adult life, and a substantial proportion were not included in the employable group owing to age or infirmity.

The home teaching service as it existed in Canada used to be carried out by voluntary visitors, or by blind or sighted persons with little or no special training for the work. Substantial developments, however, had been made. It had been recognised that there was a very necessary service to be rendered, and that trained and understanding personnel must be considered a primary requisite. The standard of qualifications for the service was rapidly being raised. The requirements were a knowledge of handicrafts and also of social science. The latter qualification was necessary, because the home teacher was the first contact with the blind person. She not only had to encourage and re-establish his morale, and persuade him to undertake some occupation, but she also had to demonstrate to the sighted members of the family that the blind person was not afflicted or helpless. She had to advise on suitable employment. In the case of the aged, the home teacher could perform a very important function in encouraging an interest in reading or in the Talking Book, or some simple handicraft.

An important point to emphasise was that in Canada it was a definite ruling that only registered blind persons should be employed as home teachers; there were approximately 42 of them in Canada. The employment of blind home teachers was the only way to emphasise to sighted people the capabilities of the blind themselves.

MR. GETLIFF (United Kingdom), fully endorsed Colonel Baker's views and said that 5 out of the 6 home teachers employed by his Institution were registered blind persons. He thought that the ideal home teaching service could be best achieved by the co-opera-

tion of blind and sighted home teachers. In Great Britain, the need for a home teaching service had been recognised in 1923, when examination qualifications were laid down as essential; since that date the College of Teachers of the Blind had been the agent of the Ministry of Health for preparing and conducting the examination for home teachers.

Rehabilitation, readjustment and re-conditioning were all important parts of the work of a home teacher, and they sometimes had to be applied to the family of the newly blind person, even more than to the blind person himself. The home teacher must be physically strong, capable of being out in all weathers, of cheerful equable temperament, patient and sympathetic, with an interest in people and affairs, with some manual dexterity, and with a certain amount of common sense. A live, qualified home teaching service was the heart of all blind welfare work. The speaker also referred to the help given by home teachers to the deaf-blind.

MONSIEUR BORRÉ (Belgium), said that a Braille Service had been organised in 1936, and great importance was attached to home teaching, with special reference to the mental and moral strain which might accompany the onset of blindness. He explained the procedure for training social workers in this field, and the practical experience which each worker had to acquire before becoming qualified. Social workers played a very important part in the work of rehabilitation. He said that successful work was being done in home teaching by blind people, and especially by people who had lost their sight in adult life.

MR. H. KARTERUD (Norway), agreed that the best home teaching service would be rendered by blind persons, and expressed the hope that this point would be brought out in the resolution. In Norway blind teachers visited clinics in order to register the newly blind, and while there they taught them Braille and encouraged them to take up life again. He thought that blind persons should go to training schools if they were employable. He felt that in Norway, and possibly in the other Scandinavian countries too little had been done to expand this service, and asked if the American Foundation could supply information about the training and certification of home teachers.

THE CHAIRMAN asked Mr. Karterud to send his request to the A.F.O.B., which would be able to forward literature in English on this subject.

MR. J. E. JARVIS (Assistant Secretary to the Conference), gave the Conference an account of how the home teaching service helped his early education, and made it possible for him to enter a

Secondary School at the age of nine, despite the fact that he had had no school education before that age.

DR. VOIGT (Germany), on behalf of Dr. Winter (Germany), said that the speeches made by Colonel Baker and Mr. Getliff were most convincing, and referred to the visits which Dr. Winter had paid to Institutions for the Blind in England last year, and the opportunity he had had to study the home teaching service. He was of opinion that it was immaterial whether a home teacher was blind or sighted. A home teacher should combine knowledge with an idealistic self-sacrificing attitude of mind, and if the choice lay between two equally suitable persons, one of whom was blind, the preference should be given to the blind person. In Germany there was no home teaching service. Social workers employed by the Government were at present doing the work, and Dr. Winter felt that the introduction of a home teaching service in Germany was not only highly desirable but indispensable.

MR. TINGEN (Holland), also regretted that there was no home teaching service in his country, and endorsed the suggestion that blind people should be employed in this work.

MR. CORMACK (United Kingdom), raised the question of how many home teachers were required adequately to perform the duties of the service. He referred to Colonel Baker's statement that there were approximately 42 home teachers in Canada, and stated that in Great Britain there were approximately 800; even that number was not considered sufficient to meet all requirements. He further explained that as there was a scarcity of qualified home teachers, they were admitted to the service without qualifications, provided that they took the examination within two years of their appointment. He pointed out that the home teacher, in addition to her other duties, organised social centres where the blind could meet.

MONSIEUR SALIS (France), stated that in one part of France, as soon as a newly-blind person had been reported, the Fédération des Aveugles Civils de France et de L'Union Française made arrangements to visit him, and got his neighbours to undertake special jobs to help him. At the same time, the Fédération made arrangements for specialised rehabilitation, and contact was established with his former employer.

DR. SPAHR (Switzerland), asked if the blind home teacher was able to afford to pay for a guide for travelling.

MR. GETLIFF (United Kingdom), replied that all home teachers in Britain were employed by the local authority, and a guide's allowance was made. The employment of a guide was left to the home teacher, and the amount paid to the guide was also the business

of the home teacher ; she might wish to pay more than the guide's allowance. Cheap travelling facilities were also provided in some parts of the country. The case for the employment of blind home teachers would be weakened if their independence as self-supporting employees were advocated, and at the same time concessions had to be asked before they could undertake the work.

CAPTAIN QUAGLIOTTI (Italy), asked who was responsible in Canada and Great Britain for the home teaching service, and Mr. Getliff replied that in Great Britain the Local Authorities were responsible.

THE CHAIRMAN stated that in Canada the Canadian National Institute for the Blind bore the cost of the home teaching service. In the U.S.A. a few home teachers were paid for by private associations. In most states the Government paid. He further stated that blindness was considered an asset rather than a liability, when employing home teachers. When they were well paid, they provided their own guides, but where they were unable to do this, the State provided the necessary guide. The A.F.B. felt that a home teacher should be a college graduate, and also have one year of training as a social worker. Scholarships were provided to help blind people to take the necessary training.

MONSIEUR RAVERAT (U.S.A.) asked the annual cost of employment of a home teacher. The Chairman gave the figure of 5,000 dollars, which included the cost of a guide.

On the question of providing funds for such a service, the Chairman said that he had always found that if the public really wanted a service, the money would be forthcoming. It was necessary to prove to the public that a home teaching service was imperative, and he felt that sooner or later the money would be secured.

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom), paid tribute to the help which wives and mothers give to blind men.

The Chairman announced that the Drafting Committee would be composed as follows :—

MR. E. H. GETLIFF (United Kingdom).

MR. H. KARTERUD (Norway).

MONSIEUR G. BORRÉ (Belgium).

DR. V. DOLANSKI (Poland).

MR. F. G. TINGEN (Holland).

(For Final Resolution on Care of the Blind at Home, see Page 142).

HOMES FOR THE BLIND

DR. FARRELL (U.S.A.), Chairman for this Session, asked DR. STREHL (Germany), to expound the resolution as follows :—

“That accommodation in Homes should be provided for blind people who are aged, or for other reasons unable to earn an independent livelihood, whose welfare cannot be adequately assured by private domestic arrangements.”

Dr. Strehl emphasised the importance of the resolution and enumerated the three types of blind person for which Homes were needed :—

- (1) Aged blind people.
- (2) Aged blind people who have other infirmities.
- (3) Younger people who, by reason of their training or work, must live away from their own homes.

Dr. Strehl emphasised the need of persons in the first two groups, who must have the care and attention which, by reason of inadequate incomes, they were unable to provide for themselves. It was a moral duty to do everything possible to erect as many Homes as were needed, and to obtain the necessary financial support from local authorities.

MR. ANDERSON (United Kingdom), spoke of Homes for the blind; he said they found a special need existed for Homes for blind women, both young and elderly.

THE CHAIRMAN said that special attention should be given to the provision of Homes for the deaf-blind ; he would like to see a reference to the extension of facilities for this doubly handicapped group included in the resolution.

MR. GETLIFF (United Kingdom), said that there were 101 Homes in England and more were still needed. It was not sufficient merely to provide for the material needs of the blind ; they must be given every comfort which they would normally have in their own homes, and the staff should be educated to achieve this object. Speaking of the deaf-blind he strongly opposed their segregation. Experience in his part of the country had shown that the deaf-blind benefited from communal life in an ordinary Home for the Blind.

MONSIEUR SALIS (France), said that he would be very pleased to give details of the Homes in his country to any of the delegates who were interested.

MR. JOHNSTON SHERMAN (United Kingdom), stressed the importance of including adequate recreational facilities in Homes.

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom), said that in order to ensure happiness in Homes for the Blind, there must be people outside the Home who were willing to make friends with the residents ; interests outside the Home ; and sufficient occupations in the Home.

On the question of segregation of the deaf-blind it had been found that Homes solely for the deaf-blind satisfied a very great need. Such Homes, however, were the most difficult to staff ; they needed people with a definite sense of mission to run them. He hoped that without raising religious controversy, he might suggest that religious orders should, where possible, undertake this work. He also pointed out the need for the provision of Homes for elderly married couples and said there was one Home of this type in England.

MONSIEUR JACOT (Switzerland) gave details of Homes in his country, with particular reference to two Homes for the feeble-minded blind. He hoped some reference to this group would be included in the resolution.

CAPTAIN QUAGLIOTTI said that in Italy the position was distressing, and only the question of provision for the third of the groups mentioned by Dr. Strehl had been solved. For the other categories they had only got as far as presenting a plan to the Government. Every effort had to be made to improve inadequate Homes, and to obtain necessary financial support from the Government†.

MONSIEUR LELIÈVRE (France), stated, with reference to Mr. Eagar's suggestion that religious orders might undertake the care of the deaf-blind, that of the schools in his organisation, two were schools and homes for the deaf-blind, one for girls at Larnay, directed by the Soeurs de la Sagesse, and one for boys at Poitiers, under the direction of the Frères de Saint-Gabriel.

The Chairman stated that the following delegates would constitute the Drafting Committee :—

PROFESSOR DR. STREHL (Germany).

MR. C. H. W. G. ANDERSON (United Kingdom).

MONSIEUR SALIS (France).

MONSIEUR JACOT (Switzerland).

MONSIEUR D. LELIÈVRE (France).

† Professor Bentivoglio later elaborated Captain Quagliotti's remarks, and said that matters in Italy were beginning to improve.

Monsieur Salis also amplified his previous remarks, and said that Committees composed of three blind men and three blind women, elected by the residents, met monthly under the direction of the Head of the Home, to discuss questions involving administration of the Homes.

(For Final Resolution on Homes for the Blind, see Page 142).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BLIND

The Chairman asked MR. BOULTER (U.S.A.) to expound the following resolution :—

That every encouragement should be given to private organisations of, and for, the blind. They should be entrusted with such special functions as they could effectively perform, and close and confident co-operation should be established between them and public authorities. Basic responsibility for the welfare of the blind should, however, be accepted by national governments, and by local or regional authorities.

Mr. Boulter stated that he thought the resolution as it stood adequately covered the subject. He felt there could be no argument on the phrase which indicated that basic responsibility for the welfare of the blind should be accepted by national governments and local or regional authorities, as that point had been consistently made throughout the Conference. Rather more, however, than that was needed. There was a great danger that blind people might be included with other handicapped people, with detriment to opportunities for the blind, and to the work hitherto carried out on their behalf. For this reason, it was essential that special services for the blind should be entrusted to agencies and organisations of, and for, the blind. Between those organisations and the governments and local or regional authorities, there must be constant interchange of opinion and consultation and, above all, confidence.

MONSIEUR L. RENAUX (France), then outlined the system which had existed in France, and that now prevailing. Whereas at the end of the last century only associations for blind people had existed, since the first world war the *Fédération des Aveugles Civils de France et de l'Union Française* had been founded. The differences in pensions for war-blinded and civilian blind led to disagreements which resulted in the public powers evading their duty towards the blind. That situation had now changed, and Monsieur Renaux spoke of the founding of the Central Committee, on which were represented the various organisations for, and of, the blind of France, and the results obtained through cordial and constant collaboration. Only by the united efforts of workers for the blind and groups of the blind themselves could justice be obtained from the government and from the public.

COLONEL BAKER (Canada), said that in Canada great importance was attached to the united action of the blind and those interested in their welfare, and it was realised that the only way to achieve

success was on these lines. He spoke of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, composed of interested sighted public-spirited citizens and representative blind persons, and of the Canadian Council of the Blind which consisted entirely of blind persons. Both organisations were in agreement in the matter of developing public interest and support, and of determining programmes to be presented to the national and local governments. Reference to the history of work for the blind would show that the pioneering efforts were made by private enterprise, and he would never entertain the idea of leaving the welfare of the blind wholly to the State. The ideal for which everyone should work was a co-ordinated system of private services for the blind with the fullest co-operation of the blind themselves, and the support of the government.

HERR JORGENSEN (Denmark), said that the Scandinavian delegates were of the opinion that the question of the acceptance by governments of basic responsibility for the welfare of the blind should have preceded all other discussions. By accepting such responsibilities, governments benefited not only the blind, but the whole community. It was important to frame the resolutions in such a way as to increase respect for the cause of the blind.

DR. FARRELL (U.S.A.), said that it should be borne in mind that some 75 per cent of blindness was preventable; the responsibility for that blindness rested not upon the individual but on society in general for neglecting the prevention of loss of sight.

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom), said that Dr. Farrell's statement pointed to the fact that some reference to the prevention of blindness should be included in the resolution, and he suggested that the last sentence of the resolution should read: "Basic responsibility for the welfare of the blind should, however, be accepted by national governments and by local or regional authorities, which should also pursue a comprehensive programme for the prevention of blindness."

PROFESSOR BENTIVOGLIO said that in Italy there was one single organisation for the blind, thereby establishing complete unity of purpose and view. He believed in collaboration between sighted and blind people, but stressed the importance of the views of the blind themselves being taken into account at all times. He felt it better that organisations for the welfare of the blind should be run principally by the blind, and for that reason he was not entirely in agreement with the phrasing of the resolution. He thought that less stress should be laid upon the encouragement of private organisations for the blind.

MONSIEUR AMBLARD (France), thought that the resolution should be so worded as to give fuller explanation of the encouragement to be given to private organisations of, and for, the blind.

DR. STREHL (Germany), outlined the co-operation of the various organisations in Germany, and urged that the resolution should be so drafted as to emphasise that responsibility for the blind should also rest with the blind.

MONSIEUR SALIS (France), said that it was very important that the blind themselves should lead the way in blind welfare, and advocated the setting up of central committees.

HERR BICK (Austria), expressed agreement with the terms of the resolution, and looked forward to the time when the whole minimum programme would be put into action, and complete co-operation between the government and various organisations for, and of, the blind be established.

MR. TINGEN (Holland), endorsed what had been said by Herr Jorgensen and other delegates. The blind in Holland owed much to private initiative, and he would stress the importance of the blind themselves being represented wherever their interests were being dealt with.

MISS B. E. KNOX (Eire), while agreeing with the resolution, saw a danger in small groups, not properly to be entrusted with the functions to be performed, being set up, and asked that the resolution should refer to "private organisations of recognised status."

MONSIEUR BALLISTE (France-Algeria), realised the importance of the organisations under the control of the blind, but acknowledged the big part that was played by the organisations for the blind; he instanced the great work done by the American Foundation for the Blind under its blind Executive Director.

MR. BOULTER, in summing up the discussion, said there seemed to be general agreement that basic responsibility for the blind should be accepted by governments. It was also evident that all were agreed that there was work for both the blind themselves, and those who devoted their lives to serving the blind, and that full co-operation between these groups and national governments was most important. The Conference itself was proof of the full co-operation that could be established between the blind, and those working for the blind.

The Chairman announced that the following delegates were appointed to the Drafting Committee :—

HERR E. JORGENSEN (Denmark).

COLONEL E. A. BAKER (Canada).

MONSIEUR L. RENAUX (France).

(For Final Resolution on Responsibility for the Blind, see page 140).

SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR THE BLIND

The Chairman called on MONSIEUR RAVERAT (U.S.A.), to present the resolution as follows :—

- (a) That the need of blind persons for guides when travelling should be recognised by concessions in fares.
- (b) That the special value of the radio to the blind should be recognised, by the granting of free radio receiving licenses, and, where possible, receiving sets.
- (c) That organisations publishing literature, and manufacturing or distributing apparatus and appliances for the blind, or operating libraries for the blind, should be encouraged and financially assisted, so that such materials might be available to all blind persons either free, or at prices which they could afford.
- (d) That all apparatus and appliances especially made or adapted for the use of the blind and addressed by institutions, societies or workshops concerned with the education, employment or professional interests of the blind, to analogous organisations in other countries, should be exempt from any import or customs duty.

Monsieur Raverat said that he need not labour the importance of the resolution under discussion. As far as transport concessions were concerned, it was obvious that these should be made available to the blind. Wireless sets were indispensable to the blind, and free radio licenses should be granted. Apparatus and appliances for the blind ought to be sold at prices which the blind could afford, and it was important also that countries which did not manufacture such goods should be able to import them, without payment of import or customs duty. Governments should take their part in the distribution of Braille books, and in particular in the provision of school text-books for every school child.

MR. KARTERUD (Norway), on behalf of the Scandinavian delegations, thought that the third point was the most important, and should therefore be put first in the resolution. He also referred to the advisability of standardising Braille apparatus and especially mathematical, scientific and music notations. These were matters which could be considered by the International Committee. In Denmark, prisoners undertook stereotyping Braille plates for the printers, and also a certain amount of hand-written books in Braille, thus providing a large amount of literature at a very cheap rate. He urged that the first point in the resolution

should be made the third point, as he did not want to emphasise too much that a blind person always needed a guide.

MR. ANDERSON (United Kingdom), said that in the production of text-books for schools there should be complete co-operation between the user and the producer. Often books were produced for schools and never used. He thought that the expense of the production of Braille (owing to the small editions required), was not always fully realised.

The same applied to apparatus. The cost of producing apparatus was considerable, owing to the fact that it might be necessary to make several prototypes, as they very often broke down under the exceptional testing which was given them. The small quantities of apparatus which were required kept the price high. He suggested that the sizes of Braille writers and paper should be standardised. On the question of Braille codes, he thought that inkprint mathematics was not international, nor uniform even between English-speaking countries. As far as text-books were concerned, the presentation of the subject varied from nation to nation. He stressed the importance of considering the finger rather than those who read with their eyes; a slavish following of inkprint usage might handicap rather than help the finger-reader. In the matter of music he felt the subject was much more international, and some degree of standardisation should certainly be achieved.

DR. STREHL (Germany), on behalf of the German delegation, agreed with the resolution as drafted, and said that he believed most European countries had agreed to one international mathematical and chemistry code. Between the English and the German notation there was only a very slight difference, and text-books written in German or embossed in England or America could be read by any student studying mathematics, chemistry etc. Regarding Braille literature, in Germany the Government subsidised libraries for the blind and printing houses, and it was important to try and get other governments to do the same. Braille manuscript work in German was very expensive and difficult to obtain. Private or voluntary help was never used for this work, as too many mistakes were made in the transcriptions.

MONSIEUR BALLISTE (France-Algeria), thought it very important to urge the complete exemption from customs duty of apparatus and appliances for the blind. He emphasised the need to standardise apparatus in every country, and thought that international agreement should be sought concerning the printing of music. He suggested that it might be possible for certain countries to undertake the production of one particular type of apparatus (e.g., the

United States could manufacture all writing machines ; France, music), thus avoiding duplication.

MONSIEUR RAVERAT reminded the delegates that a Conference was convened in Paris in 1929 to consider the standardisation of music in Braille. It had been possible only to standardise the symbols. Agreement had not been reached on the other points discussed (e.g., whether music should be written bar-by-bar, or phrase-by-phrase, etc.). He thought that nothing more could be done at present on this matter, unless some extension could be made in the number of symbols already accepted. Plans were already in hand to resume conversations on this subject.

SIR CLUTHA MACKENZIE (U.N.E.S.C.O.), on the question of customs duty on apparatus, suggested that it might be desirable to compile a schedule of what should be regarded as apparatus for the blind, and the resolution might recommend that duty should be waived in the case of *bona fide* blind individuals importing apparatus, as well as organisations for the blind.

THE CHAIRMAN said that in the U.S.A. special apparatus for the blind was imported duty free by individuals. It had been felt, when drafting this resolution, that certain appliances such as watches would not be admitted duty free, as sighted people could use them. The recommendation was therefore based on the minimum which could be asked for. There was no reason why a country should not go still further on the question of concessions.

DR. VOIGT (Germany), on behalf of Ing. A. Schramm (Germany), informed the Conference of the machinery which Ing. Schramm had developed, based on the magnetophone principle, which he thought might eventually become a very useful appliance for the blind. By the addition of a simple device, this apparatus could be used as a dictaphone, and with the aid of a microfilm a blind person could record speeches or music on a spool. He gave some details concerning the cost of producing this apparatus ; he believed that similar production was going on in other countries, but as he had no information about this, he could not judge whether mass production would be worth while.

DR. VOIGT (Germany), on behalf of Dr. Trapny (Austria), said that the blind in Austria were very grateful to the A.F.O.B. for the gift of a stereotyping machine and Braille printing press, together with supplies of Braille paper.

MONSIEUR JACOT (Switzerland), pressed for the inclusion in the resolution of a recommendation that from the legal point of view the white stick should be internationally recognised as the symbol of the blind.

MR. TINGEN (Holland) thought that guide dogs should be included among the special facilities needed by the blind.

MR. KARTERUD (Norway), thought that the resolution should include a recommendation that Talking Books should be sent by post at the same rates as Braille literature.

The Chairman stated that in the U.S.A. and Great Britain Talking Books were carried by post at the reduced rates allowed for Braille literature.

MISS KNOX (Eire), said that full postal rates were charged in Eire on Talking Books sent back to England, but efforts were being made to obtain a reduction.

MONSIEUR RAVERAT, summing up the discussion, said that he thought the resolution as offered, with a few slight modifications, expressed the general feeling of the Conference. It should be emphasised that in every country organisations for the blind should be assured of some financial assistance from their respective governments, in order to increase the supply of Braille literature. On music notation, he thought steps should be taken in the near future, not to standardise the prescribed methods employed in different countries, but to extend the number of symbols used. As far as guide-dogs were concerned, several countries already used them extensively ; in some European countries, it had been extremely difficult to obtain enough food for their upkeep during the war period.

The Chairman announced that the Drafting Committee would consist of the following :—

MR. H. KARTERUD (Norway).

PROFESSOR DR. C. STREHL (Germany).

MR. C. H. W. G. ANDERSON (United Kingdom).

On the question of the Talking Book, the Chairman stated that the American Foundations for the Blind and the Overseas Blind were very much concerned about the production of small editions for countries where the demand was small. The problem would soon be solved, and small editions would be available and reasonably satisfactory, though not of the same quality as those used in England and America. The main problem now was to get a reading machine that was not too costly. In America a machine had been developed costing between £8 and £10, but it was felt that it would be difficult to pay that price on the Continent.

MONSIEUR GUINOT (France), said that the subject entitled Legislation included in the questionnaire was not covered by any of the resolutions submitted by the Organising Committee ; he would like to draw the attention of delegates to the importance of this question. During the past ten days the Conference had been

discussing questions which arose from the one single aim, which was to request public authorities to give assistance to the blind. If it was desired to secure legal arrangements in order to bring financial aid and other facilities to the blind, the Conference could not refrain from recommending that legislation should be adopted in each country to this end. He did not propose that any alteration should be made in the legal measures already existing in various countries, but recommended that all the Acts referring to the blind should be assembled, and made into a Code or Statute for the Blind. He referred to the comments which had been made on the danger of the blind losing the special facilities, already secured to them, in the welfare schemes now being formulated on behalf of other disabled persons. If it was considered that the blind person had a superior claim above all other disabled persons, then the blind should have legislation to cover this. He urged that the Conference should make a formal and solemn declaration that a statute should exist for the blind which would not confuse the blind with other disabled persons.

MR. SMITH (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the British delegates, wished to dissociate himself with any resolution on the lines suggested by Monsieur Guinot. The blind in Great Britain were covered by the National Assistance Act of 1948, which not only made special provision for the blind, but included other handicapped persons. He thought that any suggestion that blindness was the only affliction which deserved favourable consideration would be damaging to the cause of the blind, and a great amount of public sympathy would be lost.

EDUCATION

The Chairman referred to the meeting of educationists, convened by Dr. Farrell (U.S.A.), in accordance with the previous decision of the Conference, and stated that Dr. Farrell would now report the results of the meeting.

DR. FARRELL said that the meeting had agreed that, while they respected the opinion of the Organising Committee that education was too wide a subject to discuss at this Conference, it was of such importance that the Conference should record its conviction that it regarded education as the foundation-stone on which all work for the blind was based. The success or failure of the blind depended very largely on their education or re-education. Those delegates engaged on education had held a meeting and had agreed to submit to the Conference the following resolution :—

To enable blind persons to participate fully in the life of the community and to contribute to its strength, blind

persons, whether children, young persons or adults, should be given full opportunity for general and vocational education, in schools adequately equipped for the education of the blind, and with fully qualified teachers.

The Conference puts on record its conviction that every national system of education should ensure to all blind children education according to their interests and aptitudes, at least equal to that which they would have received if they had not been blind.

Dr. Farrell said that the educationists thought that the resolution as now worded stated their objective. They had not gone into the details of the type of education required. It was not easy to decide what attitude an educationist should take towards those who were engaged or interested in the welfare of blind persons, particularly adults. It was possible to say that many adults who needed the assistance which was being claimed for them, might not have needed it if the teachers in the schools had done their job well. On the other hand, educationists could say that if they had the support, the equipment and the teachers, they could almost make welfare workers unnecessary, as the educationists would train the blind young people to attain the objective to which all were striving, and enable them to take a contributory place in the community, and to carry their own weight through life. He emphasised the need to tell the world a little more than was done at present about the blind people who were making their way in life and who did not need assistance or help.

He further informed the Conference that the educationists present had considered that steps should be taken to call an International Conference to consider problems connected with education, and had proposed the following resolution to this end :—

Having expressed its conviction of the importance of education, this Conference recommends that steps be taken to convene a Conference, at a later time but as soon as possible, for the discussion of problems of education common to all countries, and that that Conference be conducted by persons engaged primarily in the education of the blind, and that the undernamed persons be appointed as a Committee to enquire into the possibilities of convening such an educational Conference :—

MR. C. H. W. G. ANDERSON (Great Britain).

PROFESSOR PAOLO BENTIVOGLIO (Italy).

DR. GABRIEL FARRELL (United States).

MR. EERO HAKKINEN (Finland).

MR. HALVDAN KARTERUD (Norway).

MONSIEUR D. LELIÈVRE (France).

DR. KARL TRAPNY (Austria).

together with the Head of School where Conference is held.

It was moved by Dr. Farrell (U.S.A.), seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on education put forward by the meeting of educationists present at the Conference be adopted.

It was further moved by Dr. Farrell (U.S.A.), seconded by Mr. Getliff (United Kingdom), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution requesting the convening of an International Conference to consider educational problems be adopted.

Thirteenth Session

Friday Morning, 12th August, 1949

The Chairman invited MR. IRVING J. FASTEAU (Social Service Attaché to the American Embassy in Paris), to address the meeting.

Mr. Fasteau said: "Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am indeed grateful to you for giving me the opportunity of meeting with you and for the privilege of making certain observations on this Conference. I make this statement, not as a representative of my Government, but as a person who is interested in the broad field of social welfare which includes blind welfare.

"During the past nine days, I have observed you, under the dynamic and democratic leadership of your Chairman, hammer out resolutions which will serve as a guide to all of you in your future planning. It has indeed been an inspiring sight to see that when men of good will, with a common purpose, meet together, they iron out their differences—differences which are always present when intelligent human beings assemble—and advance the common cause. By your action, you have demonstrated that there is hope for the future of mankind.

"I have noted during your discussions that one or two issues seem to have come to the fore, and, with your permission, I will comment on them. One of primary importance is the matter of relationships between sighted and sightless workers for the blind. In my humble opinion, both the sighted and the sightless workers are needed by your programme. I urge this Conference to take no action which will in any way diminish the interest and contributions or deny to the sighted persons that privilege of working for the blind.

“The second issue involves the relationships between the specialist and the general field of blind welfare. May I say that every field as it develops its body of knowledge is confronted with the same problem? With an increased knowledge of a field of work, there is an inevitable move to split the body of knowledge to concentrate on one or another phase of the total programme. Thus the expert is created. The expert makes very valuable contributions. He does so by developing further the body of knowledge in his special area of competence, and methods for applying this knowledge. It also follows that it is more difficult for a specialist who focuses continually on his area of specialisation to see the broad field as a whole. The tendency of the expert is to give more weight in terms of relative importance to that particular area of activity with which he is concerned. You, as leaders of the field of blind welfare, have a very basic responsibility for integrating the contributions of the specialists, and moving the total programme forward in a balanced manner. This is not an easy task nor a light responsibility. To discharge it effectively requires wisdom, knowledge and often self-sacrifice.

“I have heard delegates of this Conference say that unless the Conference took action which would result in the creation of a permanent body, the time and effort devoted to this Conference would be wasted. In my humble opinion, this is contrary to the facts. During the past nine days, there has been a most valuable interchange of knowledge, both at formal and informal meetings. Through the excellent organisation and management of your Secretary, you have had opportunity of developing warm and most valuable personal relationships. These relationships will, without doubt, greatly facilitate your work in the future, and intercourse between yourselves when you leave Oxford. And last but not least, the drafting of your resolutions, which you are now putting into final form, cannot be called wasted effort. These resolutions will serve as a guide and inspiration to all agencies represented here, in the future development of your respective programmes. If they are distributed to appropriate organisations and agencies throughout the world, this Conference will have advanced the cause of blind welfare beyond our immediate imagination. Certainly, you are laying the ground work of constructive public opinion. By your work, you are gaining the respect of the world and agencies interested in public welfare.

“At this point of the Conference, I have come to the conclusion that you are modest people. Throughout your meetings you have dealt with the needs of the blind, the contributions that the sighted can make to the blind, but you have not once mentioned the contri-

bution that the blind make to society as a whole. It seems to me that some consideration should be given to this matter. We are living in troubled times. Anxiety, tension, stress are part and parcel of our daily lives. We all get discouraged at times, and in my opinion the courage, the will and the intelligence with which the blind apply themselves to overcome their handicaps, to take their place, to make their contribution, is of great importance to society as a whole. We all need to have our morale sustained. Certainly the work and the efforts of the blind set an example which help sustain our morale.

"You will note that I have made no comment on a very important issue before you, namely the question as to whether this body should affiliate itself with an international organisation such as the United Nations. I am not in a position to comment on this question, and shall not do so unless specifically requested.

"I am grateful for the opportunity of meeting with you. I have learned much. I am afraid I have contributed very little. I will take back with me knowledge which, I am sure, will help me in furthering your work in the future."

The Chairman thanked Mr. Fasteau for his remarks, and expressed appreciation of the time and trouble he had taken to attend the Conference. He hoped that Mr. Fasteau would be able to interpret to those with whom he was associated the desires and aspirations of the blind and of their friends throughout the world. He thought that what Mr. Fasteau had said was of unusual significance, because, unlike so many present, he was not an expert on work for the blind, but an authority on social welfare work, and therefore his observations were made with a breadth of perspective which no one else present had. What he had said was a great help and encouragement.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

The Chairman stated that the Planning Committee appointed at the Eighth Session (8th August, 1949), had met and had passed the following resolution :—

That in view of the responsibility undertaken by the organisations which have convened this Conference, and the relations established with United Nations, the responsibility for making a report of the findings of this Conference to United Nations, and for taking whatever other steps are necessary to implement these findings, necessarily lies on the Organising Committee. Out of this Conference has grown a desire for an international body composed of organisations of, and for, the blind. The Organising Committee approves

the establishment of a small Planning Committee to develop plans for such an organisation. Since this Planning Committee cannot effectively proceed with its work without an office and clerical service, the American Foundation for Overseas Blind offers to extend to this Committee executive and clerical services for at least one year, on condition that a member of the staff of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind may serve as a member of the Planning Committee and act as Secretary. All other operating costs of the Committee must be met by its members.

The Chairman said that the Organising Committee would take the responsibility for laying this matter before the United Nations. The Report of the Planning Committee (see Appendix II) was then read, and on the motion of Herr Jorgensen (Denmark), seconded by Colonel Baker (Canada), it was unanimously accepted.

The Chairman said that the acceptance of the Report was a significant point in the programme before the Conference; the question now to be discussed was how to carry out the recommendations made.

Herr Jorgensen (Denmark), said that it would be necessary to know which countries would participate in the International Organisation, and suggested that a roll be called of all countries represented.

The Chairman said that expenditure in connection with the Organisation would not amount to much during the first year or two. Travelling expenses would be incurred for one or two Committee meetings. The A.F.O.B. would undertake to meet the office expenses and the administrative expenses of the Committee, at least until the end of 1950. Further help after that would depend on the status of the Committee, how much work had been accomplished, and the financial status of the A.F.O.B.

The Chairman said that he accepted the proposal that the representatives of each country present should state whether they were willing to join the proposed International Organisation, with the financial contribution involved. Each country having been called on in alphabetical order, the representatives of the following countries agreed :—

Austria	Finland
Belgium	France
Canada	Germany
Denmark	Greece
Eire	Holland

Italy
Norway
Poland

Sweden
United States of America

The delegates from Switzerland could not commit themselves without reference to the Swiss Government, but hoped that Switzerland would be able to participate.

Regarding the United Kingdom, Mr. Eagar said that, having regard to the decided policy of the National Institute for the Blind, he could accept on behalf of it, but that he would need to consult with the other members of the British delegation as to the form which participation will take.

It was agreed that the countries or groups of countries named in the Report should each nominate a representative to sit on the Planning Committee, which would meet later in the day to decide further action.

The Chairman expressed appreciation at the splendid response made.

At a later meeting, the resolution constituting the International Committee for the Welfare of the Blind (see page 146) was unanimously agreed.

The British delegation stated that it had unanimously elected Mr. Eagar (in his personal capacity), as its representative.

(A) RESOLUTIONS CONSTITUTING MINIMUM PROGRAMME

The Chairman stated that the Organising Committee had now received the resolutions on each of the subjects of the Conference, submitted by the Drafting Committees appointed to consider them at each of the sessions. The Organising Committee had considered them individually and as a whole, with a view to formulating the views of the Conference concisely and lucidly. The document now placed before the Conference contained the final resolutions as recommended by the Organising Committee.

MR. Getliff (United Kingdom), pointed out that the resolutions on Responsibility for the Blind and Economic Provision stated basic principles of blind welfare, on which the other resolutions necessarily rested. He proposed, therefore, that the order of the resolutions be re-considered. The Chairman agreed that this point should be referred to the Organising Committee, which should be given authority to re-order the resolutions if it thought it desirable.

NOTE.—The resolutions are set out below in amended order.

I.—REGISTRATION

In every country the law should provide :—

1. A definition of blindness, to include both the totally blind and all other persons suffering from such defect of vision that they also require special education or special assistance to save them from destitution, and to enable them to share in the economic and cultural life of the nation.

2. The establishment and maintenance of an active register of all such persons.

Further, the importance of establishing a standard international definition of blindness should be urged on competent authorities with international scope.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Colonel Baker (Canada), and

RESOLVED (with 2 dissentients)

That the resolution on Registration be adopted.

II.—RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BLIND

Basic responsibility for the welfare of the blind and for prevention of blindness should be accepted by National Governments, and should extend to all territories under their jurisdiction. Every encouragement should, however, be given to properly constituted private organisations of and for the blind, which should be entrusted with such functions as they can effectively perform. Close and confident co-operation should be established between them and public authorities, national, regional or local, and full opportunity should at all times be given to the blind themselves to express their views and wishes. Blind persons with the necessary qualifications should, wherever possible, be employed in all services for the blind.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Monsieur Balliste (France-Algeria), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on Responsibility for the Blind be adopted.

III.—REHABILITATION AND TRAINING

The primary objective of the general plan for enabling blind men and women to take their place in the community should be to ensure that those who can work will be given opportunity to do so, and be provided with the physical, psychological and technical means for restoring confidence in ability to work and capacity to earn a livelihood in the

occupation for which each individual is best suited. The plan should also insure to all blind persons the means of entering fully into the social and cultural life of the community.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Anderson (United Kingdom), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on Rehabilitation and Training be adopted.

IV (A.)—EMPLOYMENT

Every practicable means should be used to make generally known and to impress upon legislators, administrators and the general public that many blind persons are capable of fully economic production in factories and offices, and that many of them are competent to follow certain professions. Blind persons should not be refused employment simply on the ground of their blindness.

It was moved by Colonel Baker (Canada), seconded by Dr. Strehl (Germany), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on Employment (A) be adopted.

IV (B.)—EMPLOYMENT

For blind persons who are not capable of fully economic employment, there should be provided :—

1. " Sheltered " workshops, in which productive wages are supplemented to a recognised level of subsistence.

2. Organised systems for the employment of blind persons in their own homes which supplement the economic earnings of industrious and competent workers to a recognised level of subsistence.

3. Preferential marketing arrangements, e.g., the purchase by public authorities of the products of special workshops and home industries.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Starling (United Kingdom), and

RESOLVED (34 in favour, 4 abstentions)

That the resolution on Employment (B) be adopted.

V.—ECONOMIC PROVISION

Special economic provision should be made for all blind persons, while insuring that the incentive to work and to contribute in other ways to the economic and social life of the community is in no way impaired. Each nation should therefore provide its blind citizens with :—

1. At least a minimum standard of subsistence.
2. An adequate allowance of equal amount for all blind persons to meet the additional cost of living resulting from blindness.

Such special provision for the blind may be embodied in a general programme of social security, or may be expressly made for the blind.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Herr Jorgensen (Denmark), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on Economic Provision be adopted.

VI.—CARE OF THE BLIND AT HOME

With the object of assisting in the re-adjustment of newly blinded persons and of providing blind persons, particularly those leading lonely lives, with instruction, occupation and friendship in their own homes, home visiting and teaching services should be developed with at least a nucleus of fully qualified and trained personnel who, whenever possible, should themselves be blind.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Getliff (United Kingdom), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on Care of the Blind at Home be adopted.

VII.—HOMES FOR THE BLIND

Homes maintained by public and private agencies should be provided for blind people who are aged or handicapped by other disabilities and unable to earn an independent livelihood, whose welfare cannot be adequately assured by private domestic arrangements. Homes for the blind should provide :—

- (a) Accommodation for married couples, one or both of whom are blind.
- (b) Accommodation for deaf-blind persons in special Homes or in Homes for other blind persons.

- (c) Accommodation for blind persons for holidays or convalescence.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Dr. Strehl (Germany), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on Homes for the Blind be adopted.

VIII.—SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR THE BLIND

Organisations publishing literature and manufacturing or distributing satisfactory apparatus and appliances for the blind, or operating libraries for the blind, should be encouraged and financially assisted from government and voluntary sources, so that such materials may be available to all blind persons at prices which they can afford, when it is not possible to give them without charge.

All apparatus and appliances specially made or adapted for the use of the blind and addressed to blind persons, institutions, societies, or workshops concerned with the education, employment or professional interests of the blind, by analogous organisations in other countries, should be exempt from any import, export or other customs duties, when their nature is adequately certified.

The special value of radio to the blind should be recognised by the granting of free radio receiving licences, and, where possible, receiving sets.

The extra cost incurred by blind persons when travelling at home or abroad should be recognised by concessions in fares.

MONSIEUR AMBLARD (France), thought that reductions in fares should be asked for on an international basis.

THE CHAIRMAN stated that railroads were not international; in some places they were controlled by private companies. He doubted whether any international body would have authority to give concessions to blind people.

It was pointed out by the delegates from the U.S.A., the United Kingdom and Canada that concessions in fares for blind people included blind people from all parts of the world. In France and Germany the concessions did not include blind foreigners. In Scandinavia there were no concessions.

MONSIEUR MILHAUD (United Nations) informed the Conference that an international organisation existed on the question of transport, and this particular recommendation could be forwarded to it with the suggestion that it should be adopted in all countries. The

Chairman agreed that the Organising Committee should consider this point, and take the necessary action with the Transport Organisation.

MONSIEUR GUINOT (France) pointed out that the Drafting Committee concerned with the resolution on Economic Provision had agreed that a recommendation that blind tax-payers should be granted some remission of taxes should be included in the resolution on Special Facilities for the Blind.

MR. EAGAR (United Kingdom) replied that the Organising Committee had agreed that the phrase in the resolution on Economic Provision, namely "An adequate allowance of equal amount for all blind persons to meet the additional cost of living resulting from blindness," left it open for each country to decide what form the allowance should take, i.e., either by way of compensation or remission of taxes, it being thought unwise to ask for both compensation and remission of taxes.

MONSIEUR GUINOT was of the opinion that compensation should be granted to all blind persons on account of their blindness, since the blind person always needed the help of a second person. Remission of taxes should be granted as well to blind workers whose productive capacity is not equal to that of sighted workers in the same profession.

MR. EAGAR proposed that Monsieur Guinot's point might be met by adding the words "by remission of taxes or otherwise . . ." to paragraph 2 of the Resolution on Economic Provision, after the words "An adequate allowance of equal amount for all blind persons . . ."

On Mr. Anderson (United Kingdom) seconding Mr. Eagar's proposal, Herr Jorgensen (Denmark) pointed out that the Drafting Committee on the resolution on Economic Provision had agreed not to include the remission of taxes, for the same reason put forward by the Organising Committee, but as the Italian delegate was in favour of it they had suggested that it might be included in the resolution on Special Facilities for the Blind. He was definitely of opinion that compensation and remission of taxes should not both be asked for.

Mr. Eagar pointed out that the question of remission of taxes could not logically be included in the resolution on Special Facilities for the Blind.

After further discussion, Captain Quagliotti (Italy), stated that the Italian delegates withdrew their objection, and it was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), and
RESOLVED (38 in favour, 3 against)

That the resolution on Special Facilities for the Blind be adopted.

IX.—EDUCATION

To enable blind persons to participate fully in the life of the community and to contribute to its strength, blind persons, whether children, young persons or adults, should be given full opportunity for general and vocational education in schools adequately equipped for the education of the blind and with fully qualified teachers.

The Conference puts on record its conviction that every national system of education should ensure to all blind children education according to their interests and aptitudes at least equal to that which they would have received if they had not been blind.

(Adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Session).

X.—RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

On a resolution being moved by the Chairman and seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), Sir Clutha Mackenzie (U.N.E.S.C.O.), asked if the terms of this resolution embraced U.N.E.S.C.O. as a department of the United Nations. Monsieur Milhaud (United Nations) suggested that U.N.E.S.C.O. should be added to the resolution, and, on the Chairman putting this to the meeting, it was agreed.

Mr. Boulter (U.S.A.) asked whether, in view of the addition of U.N.E.S.C.O., other specialised departments of the United Nations should be included, and it was, on Monsieur Milhaud's recommendation, agreed to add the words "and of the Specialised Agencies of United Nations."

On the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), the resolution, amended as agreed, was adopted unanimously as follows :—

This Conference :—

1. Notes with the greatest pleasure the interest which United Nations are taking in its proceedings, and records with lively satisfaction its efforts to bring about a positive contribution to the task of developing the welfare of handicapped persons. It expresses the hope that effective action will thus be taken for the blind.

2. Instructs its Organising Committee to present to the Secretary-General of United Nations, for the attention of the Social Questions Commission and of the Specialised Agencies of United Nations, the resolutions adopted by this Conference, together with a report on the welfare of blind people, drawing the particular attention of the Secretariat of United Nations to the international measures of a practical character which can be taken in the spirit of the resolutions.

3. Calls the attention of national blind organisations to certain consultative Social Services placed at the disposal of Governments by United Nations which, at the request of the aforesaid Governments, can be made available to the advantage of administrations and institutions having as their concern the welfare of the blind.

4. Records with pleasure the message received from the Director-General of U.N.E.S.C.O., and welcomes the action he is taking to facilitate the solution of existing Braille problems, and his interest in the proceedings of the Conference. It agrees with him that the problem of blindness in certain parts of the world, where its incidence is high, and services to the blind as yet little developed, calls for urgent attention, and it will welcome all steps which may be taken towards that end.

(B) RESOLUTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION AND FUTURE ACTION

XI.—INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

In view of the desire, unanimously expressed by members of the Conference, to establish a permanent organ for consultation between organisations of and for the blind in different countries, and for joint action wherever possible, and of the offer made by the American Foundation for Overseas Blind to provide executive and clerical services to an International Committee up to the end of 1950 as an experimental period, this Conference approves the establishment of an INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND (COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL POUR LA PROTECTION SOCIALE DES AVEUGLES), on the understanding that a member of the staff of the A.F.O.B. may serve as a member and will act as its Secretary, and that the operating cost of the Committee will be met by the nations here represented; that the Committee be constituted of nine members—five representing France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and the United States; one, Scandinavia; and one, the Benelux and smaller European countries; two places being left open for representation from countries of Eastern Europe; and that the following be appointed as members of the Committee until the end of 1950;—

Belgium ...	...	Monsieur G. Borré.
Denmark ...	...	Herr Ernst Jorgensen.
France ...	...	Monsieur P. Guinot.
Germany ...	...	Dr. Carl Strehl.

Great Britain	...	Mr. W. McG. Eagar.
Italy	...	Signor Aurelio Nicolodi.
Poland	...	Dr. Vladimir Dolanski.
United States	...	Mr. Eric T. Boulter.

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.),
and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the resolution on an International Organisation be adopted.

XII. EDUCATION

Having expressed its conviction of the importance of education, this Conference recommends that steps be taken to convene a Conference, at a later time but as soon as possible, for the discussion of problems of education common to all countries, and that that Conference be conducted by persons engaged primarily in the education of the blind, and that the undernamed persons be appointed as a Committee to enquire into the possibilities of convening such an educational Conference :—

Mr. C. H. W. G. Anderson (Great Britain).

Professor Paolo Bentivoglio (Italy).

Dr. Gabriel Farrell (United States).

Mr. Eero Hakkinen (Finland).

Mr. Halvdan Karterud (Norway).

Monsieur D. Lelièvre (France).

Dr. Karl Trapny (Austria).

together with the Head of School where Conference is held.

(Adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Session).

NOTE ON RESOLUTION XII

A Sponsoring Committee for the proposed Conference on Education was subsequently appointed, consisting of the delegates named in the Twelfth Resolution, together with :—

Lt.-Col. Sir Clutha Mackenzie (U.N.E.S.C.O.).

Mr. Eric T. Boulter (American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc.).

The Chairman, at the date of the Conference, of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind, and

The Head Teacher of the Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles, Paris.

GENERAL RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That the final resolutions be adopted, and that the Organising Committee be directed to lay them before the United Nations and its appropriate Specialised Agencies, and to proceed with the publication of a full Report of the Proceedings of the Conference.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOLUTION ON ESPERANTA LIGILO

It was moved by Mr. Karterud (Norway), seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), and

RESOLVED unanimously

That, since in many countries *Esperanta Ligilo* is a valuable source of information and encouragement to the blind, this Conference commends this magazine, and hopes friends of the blind will give it adequate financial and moral support.

Fourteenth Session

Friday Afternoon, 12th August, 1949

OPEN SESSION AND VALEDICTORY

The Marshall Plan

THE CHAIRMAN, who had been asked to say something about the Marshall Plan, said that some progress had been made in France and apparently very encouraging progress had been made in Germany. In Italy efforts were being made, but the outcome was still a little uncertain. The Marshall Plan had been established to help the European countries to restore their industries. It was not intended to be used to assist individuals, but to help the Europeans to help themselves; for that reason money given under the Plan must be matched by money provided by countries themselves, from public or private funds. Certain difficulties which had arisen had not been due to the administration on the American side, but to that on the part of the countries concerned. After money had been allocated to a certain country, the Marshall Plan authorities exercised no power as to who was to benefit from the money; that was left to the discretion of the country concerned. He thought that if blind people made more use of their influential seeing friends it might be possible for them to obtain more of the Marshall Plan money. If there was one weakness in European work for the blind, it was that insufficient use was made of influential seeing friends.

Votes of Thanks

It was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.) and

RESOLVED unanimously

That a hearty vote of thanks be accorded to the following :
The Warden and Fellows of Merton College, for their generous hospitality.

The Domestic Bursar, the College Scouts and the Kitchen Staff.

The Oxford City and County Society for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind, for their hospitality at the Garden Party held on 6th August.

The Press and the B.B.C.

The International Association of Conference Interpreters and Translators, the members of which had contributed their valuable services free of cost.

Recorded Sound, Ltd., which had provided the interpretation equipment, and their engineer, Mr. R. Warman, for his valuable services.

The Secretarial Staff attached to the Conference.

Monsieur Maurice Milhaud, Head of the Social Activities Service, European Office of the United Nations, for his attendance as an Observer.

The Director General, U.N.E.S.C.O., for his courtesy in allowing Lt.-Col. Sir Clutha Mackenzie to attend as an Observer.

It was further moved by Mr. Allen (U.S.A.), seconded by Colonel Baker (Canada), and

UNANIMOUSLY AGREED

That the grateful thanks of the delegates and the agencies which they represented be expressed to the National Institute for the Blind, and its Secretary-General, Mr. W. McG. Eagar, and the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., and its Executive Director, Dr. Robert B. Irwin, and European Director, Monsieur Georges L. Raverat.

The following members of the delegations then expressed appreciation of the organisation of the Conference and thanks for the hospitality shown them :—

Mr. Clunk (U.S.A.).

Captain Quagliotti (Italy).

Monsieur Salis (France).

Herr Bick (Austria).

Dr. Strehl (Germany).

Mr. Getliff (United Kingdom).

Monsieur Borré (Belgium).

Monsieur Balliste (France-Algeria).

Herr Jorgensen (Denmark).

Dr. Farrell (U.S.A.).

MR. EAGAR, on behalf of the National Institute for the Blind, acknowledged what had been said by Mr. Allen and others, and said it had been an indescribable pleasure to everyone at the Institute to co-operate over the whole length of years of peace and war with the American Foundation for the Blind. To him personally during all the time he had been working for, and with, the blind, it had been a delight to be in constant communication with Dr. Irwin and Monsieur Raverat. He went on to pay tribute to the generosity of the American Foundation for the Blind in meeting the major part of the cost of the Conference, and expressed his thanks to Mr. Jarvis for all he had done in organising the Conference.

The Chairman told the delegates that Mr. T. Yoshimoto had flown from Tokyo to observe the work of the Conference, and asked Mr. Yoshimoto to address the meeting.

MR. YOSHIMOTO expressed his thanks for the kindness shown to him. Fair progress in connection with the education and welfare of the blind had been made in the Far East, chiefly due to the example set by England, America and other advanced countries. Compulsory free education had started early this year, and an Act similar to the Blind Persons Act, 1920, was being discussed in the House of Representatives, and would doubtless become law. He went on to say how thankful he was to see that the American Foundation for Overseas Blind and the National Institute for the Blind were doing so much for the blind outside their own countries, and asked that all those present would remember the millions of blind people in the Far East. He felt sure that when the Report of the Conference was published, the blind of China and Japan would be very much stimulated.

THE CHAIRMAN finally declared the International Conference on The Place of the Blind in the Modern World closed. It had been convened in the face of great and acknowledged difficulties. It would no doubt live in the history of blind welfare as the Oxford Conference of 1949. The objects of the Conference had been fully achieved. Questions of vital importance to the blind in all countries of the world had been thrashed out. For the first time in history, an international standard of blind welfare had been established. The Conference was closed, but an Organisation of international action had been created. It would be the ambition of all to ensure that the work done in those ten days at Oxford, with the participation of the United

Nations Organisation and of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, should be translated into positive and practical action. He thanked the delegates for attending and for the invaluable contributions which each and all of them had made to the formulation of a comprehensive policy for the blind. It had been an inexpressible pleasure to himself to have had the honour of presiding on this great occasion.

APPENDIX I

CONSULTING SOCIAL SERVICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The Assembly of the United Nations voted in 1946, a credit of about \$670,000 with a view to enabling the Secretary General to provide certain consulting social services. This credit was renewed by the Assemblies of 1947 and of 1948. The Economic and Social Council sitting at present in Geneva suggests that the next session of the Assembly will make these social services permanent.

The Governments of the member-states of the United Nations and of the countries which have been helped by U.N.R.R.A. are informed by the Secretary General, at the end of each year, that they may request the following services which will be granted to them on the basis of urgency of the need, and of the available funds :—

1. Social Advisers' Services.

Advisers may be sent at the request of a national administration in order to make recommendations for the improvement of certain social services. The names of the Advisers are put forward by the United Nations, but the final selection is made by the requesting government. The Adviser may remain several months, if necessary, in the requesting country. His stay may be limited to a few weeks. The Adviser is always selected on the basis of his high qualifications.

In certain circumstances, instead of sending Advisers, the United Nations consider it more appropriate for a specified area to set up seminars in which specialists, having a recognised responsibility in their own country, take part. Lectures on their respective subjects are then given by highly qualified experts, and are followed by exchanges of views and recommendations. Such seminars are generally of a duration of two to three weeks.

2. Social Fellowships.

Such fellowships are granted to officials having top responsibilities in the social welfare administration of their countries or in important social welfare institutions, on condition that the requesting government undertakes to absorb into its national administration the new methods deemed worthwhile on the basis of the experience gained by the beneficiary.

3. Demonstration Equipment.

The requisite apparatus could be furnished by the United Nations to requesting governments on the basis of precise specifications.

4. Social Literature.

The most recent technical literature can be furnished to governments of countries, victims of aggression, in order to allow them to be aware of the latest developments elsewhere in certain social fields.

The governments who request the services of social advisers have to supply offices and to pay the administration costs as well as the travelling expenses of the Adviser inside the beneficiary country. Those who apply for fellowships have to pay, either part or whole of the expenses of the Fellow's journey according to its possibilities. The salaries, maintenance allowances, the cost of the demonstration equipment and of the social publications are borne by the United Nations.

All these services can be sought in order to improve the well-being of the blind, provided that the governments of the interested countries apply for them to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

A credit which will be approximately the same as above-mentioned is envisaged for 1950.

APPENDIX II

REPORT OF PLANNING COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

We gratefully accept the offer of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind to provide executive and clerical service for one year.

We are going to propose to the Conference that there should be elected a Planning Committee only for this period. The duty of this Committee should be to draft a constitution for a future organisation or other means of international co-operation, after consultation with the nations not represented at this Conference.

We propose further that the Planning Committee should be elected only by those countries which at the Conference declare themselves willing to contribute equally to the cost imposed on the Committee during the planning period.

We further propose that the Committee shall consist of 9 members. We have arrived at this number because we find it natural that the 5 larger nations (Italy, France, Germany, Great

Britain and the United States) each nominate one member, and that 2 members will be left—1 for Scandinavia and 1 for the Benelux and other small countries.

Moreover, in order to provide for the representation of the Eastern part of Europe, we propose that 2 places should be kept open for the representation of Eastern European countries.

The countries present at the Conference must, before expressing their wish to participate in the planning work, consider whether they have a real desire to participate in international co-operation.

APPENDIX III

LEISURE ACTIVITIES OF THE CONFERENCE

On Saturday afternoon, 6th August, 1949, the delegates to the Conference were entertained at a Garden Party in St. John's College, Oxford, by the National Federation of the Blind of the United Kingdom, and the Oxford City and County Society for the Blind. The Garden Party was preceded by a Public Meeting in the hall of the College. On the following day, members of the Conference voyaged to Abingdon on a river steamer, an "outing" which was unfortunately marred by heavy rain; and on Wednesday, 10th August, all delegates and members of the staff went by motor-coach to Stratford-upon-Avon, where they attended a performance of Henry VIII in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

Summaries and extracts of the speeches made at the public meeting are set out below.

SPEECH BY MR. GODFREY ROBINSON, M.C.

(Vice-Chairman of the N.I.B.)

who presided over the public meeting

Mr. Robinson expressed the apologies of General Lord Ismay, Chairman of the National Institute for the Blind, who was unable to attend on doctor's advice following an operation. In Lord Ismay's absence, it was his privilege to welcome the delegates and others present, including the representatives of U.N.O. and U.N.E.S.C.O. He continued:—

"I would like straight away to express our gratitude and appreciation of the work of those concerned and the constructive generosity of the A.F.O.B., who have done most excellent and valuable work for the blind in Europe. The N.I.B. is also very greatly interested in the work of organisations for the welfare of the blind abroad. In 1945, at the end of the war, it set up an Inter-

national Contacts Committee to renew our associations with the blind established in those areas of Europe most devastated by the war. We have been able to give some of them effective help, but that help is not as great as we should have liked, because we also in this country have suffered from the war.

"We in this country have benefited very largely from those giants of blind welfare from other countries, like Louis Braille, Valentin Haüy, Miss Helen Keller and others, who have done great work themselves and have inspired all of us to greater efforts on our part. We in this country have built up, by the joint efforts of the public authorities and voluntary societies, a very comprehensive service for the blind, which takes them right through from the cradle to the grave. Our organisation in this country is not yet perfect. We can always improve, but we have a fairly comprehensive system, and we hope that you may learn from us, and that we may learn from you how it can best be improved. We realise that it is not possible for our system to be transferred to any other country. Each must develop blind welfare according to the conditions—social, political and economic—in their own country. I say we can learn from you, and we hope you can learn from us.

"There has been a long history of International Conferences for the blind, where men and women who have devoted the whole of their lives to that service are able to meet and exchange ideas and to develop policies. We hope that this Conference will be such a one, and that friendships will be formed which will last over many years, and benefit the cause of the blind all over the world. You will go back to your countries, and we shall continue our work here, and we hope that we shall meet again at further Conferences in the future. In any case we hope that the world will realise from this Conference that the blind can play a full part in the life of the community, as citizens of their nations. They will at the same time always require certain provision to help them to fight the frustrations of life and to avoid destitution.

"The participation of the United Nations Organisation at this Conference is most cordially welcomed. We believe that the results of the Conference should be very greatly helped in their application throughout the world through the efforts of the United Nations Organisation.

Before I come to my last point, I would like to say that two figures, who have been very prominent in international conferences for the blind, will probably be making this occasion their last attendance at a conference on blind welfare. They are Dr. Robert Irwin and Mr. W. Mc. G. Eagar. They have been great workers for the blind during the past quarter of a century, and they

have earned our very great respect and gratitude, and we shall miss them, but they will have left their mark on welfare for the blind. It is largely through their work that this Conference was organised. They have realised that at conferences like this a great deal of steam may be blown off but no power generated. They have had this closely in mind when drawing up the programme.

"I know that this Conference will have definite results. The programme has been kept very practical, and can be translated into action. Lastly, I would like to thank the Warden and Fellows of Merton College for allowing us to meet in the most ideal surroundings for any conference. It is extremely good of them because they have enabled an International Conference to meet in their College, and friendships to be formed which will lead to practical co-operation. They have our very cordial thanks."

SPEECH BY MR. T. H. TYLOR, B.C.L., M.A.

(Fellow and Tutor in Jurisprudence at Balliol College, Oxford, and University Lecturer in Common Law)

"I have been asked by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Low, the Dean of Christchurch, to extend a very warm welcome to all delegates and their friends on behalf of this ancient University. He much regrets his absence to-day from Oxford, a regret I am sure we all share.

"No more appropriate venue than Oxford could have been chosen for this Conference, and I am confident that you will find both inspiration and comfort for your deliberations in Merton, one of our oldest and most lovely Colleges.

"Though your immediate objective is to establish an international minimum standard of blind welfare, it is my sincere hope and belief that this Conference will inaugurate a new era in social service. The blind constitute a cross-section of society admirably adapted for pioneer experiment. Our handicap excites alike a lively endeavour in us, and an enlightened sympathy in others. Here, the organisation of blind welfare made us the aristocracy amongst disabled persons, and largely contributed to the passing of the Disabled Persons Act and other social legislation. Again, the equality of opportunity introduced by the Education Act of 1944 has been enjoyed by blind children for at least a quarter of a century. Even the wartime evacuation of little children from our bombed cities to nursery schools was largely based on experience gained over the past twenty years in our Sunshine Homes for Blind Babies.

"Important as has been our progress, I would like to emphasise two paramount factors in the methods of its attainment: one, the

close co-operation of the blind themselves with sighted pioneer workers at every stage and level ; two, the integration of State and Local Authority assistance—cultural, social and financial—with the happy blend of initiative, sacrifice in service and humanity, characteristic of voluntary organisations. This most fruitful co-ordination has been achieved through the National Institute for the Blind and County Associations to a very marked degree.

“ To translate the wisdom and experience, gained in your various countries, into international action, is the primary function of this Conference. Not only will its success confer untold blessings on many thousands of blind the world over, and pave the way for other classes of the disabled, but it may well furnish a model of international understanding and co-operation, on which alone a lasting unity can be established throughout the human race.

“ Though outside your terms of reference, may I cordially endorse your Ninth Resolution on Education. It is a trite saying that statistics can be made to prove almost anything. In a pre-war study of examination results in theology, law, history and English in this University, they showed that the percentage of candidates obtaining First or Second Class Honours was approximately twice as high amongst blind students as compared with the sighted. At least the moral may safely be drawn that blind students can take full advantage of advanced education. Such enhances their value to society as economically independent citizens (mostly in the professional classes) and moreover enables them to enjoy a far fuller life in their leisure, if any.

“ Finally, on behalf of the National Institute and all present, may I express our most cordial thanks to the Oxford Society for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind for their generous hospitality ; to the President and Fellows of St. John’s for graciously permitting the use of their Hall and beautiful grounds, and especially to Dr. Dowdell, their distinguished tutor in Economics and President of the National Federation.”

SPEECH BY HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF OXFORD, COUNCILLOR NORMAN WHATLEY, M.A.

“ A speech from me is not on the agenda of this Conference, and I am not going to make a speech, but I have been asked to give you a word of welcome ; and as you have been welcomed by this ancient University, it is only proper that you should be welcomed by this much more ancient city.

“ We have many Conferences in Oxford at this time of the year. I should not like to say how many I have welcomed in the

last few weeks, but I do not think any Conference has aroused so much interest in the city as yours, and there is certainly no conference to which the city would so much like to express its good wishes. I have, from outside, myself seen a little of the work of the blind. One of my sisters was Assistant Matron at St. Dunstan's during the first world war, and I used to serve on this city's Blind Persons' Committee before the work of the blind was taken over by the Health Committee. What I have seen, has shown me how much work has been done for the blind, and has enabled me to form my own great admiration for the blind. I wish you continued success in your work and the spread of the good work that is being done in various countries to the whole world."

SPEECH BY E. G. DOWDELL, M.A., Ph.D.

(Lecturer in Economics at St. John's College, Oxford)

(President of the National Federation of the Blind of the United Kingdom, and Chairman of the Oxford City and County Society for the Blind)

Dr. Dowdell, on behalf of the bodies he represented, warmly welcomed the decision of the Organising Committee to hold this Conference in Oxford, a particularly appropriate place because the University had been pre-eminent in the quality and quantity of education given by it to blind students and, above all, in employing blind graduates on the teaching staff. Both the National Federation and the Oxford Society for the Blind were grateful to St. John's College for allowing them to extend hospitality to the delegates in the beautiful gardens of the College. He continued:—

"The National Federation of the Blind of the United Kingdom is a relatively young organisation, but it is growing quickly and spreading over the country at a very promising speed. It tries to organise blind people of all kinds, of all parties and none, of all Trade Unions and none, so as to include housewives and solicitors as well as factory workers and handicraft workers at home, and although that may sound a very heterogeneous organisation, we find there is plenty to do in trying to influence the course of legislation and administration dealing with blind welfare. Perhaps you might say that the Federation is a watch-dog; I think a polite watch-dog as far as possible, and I might add it has something of the character of a sheepdog (if the Welfare Officers present will pardon the rather disrespectful implications of that term!). The Federation works very closely with all sorts of bodies dealing with blind welfare, statutory and voluntary, and I know you will be interested to know that the National Institute for the Blind, in

accordance with its enlightened policy on these matters, has allocated two seats on its Executive Council to the Federation.

“ The Oxford City and County Society for the Blind is, by comparison with the Federation, quite a venerable institution. Long before Parliament or other government authorities knew very much about blindness, except that it caused a great deal of begging, voluntary societies pioneered valuable work in the way that you have no doubt heard. The foundation of schools was a main step, but also up and down the country voluntary societies were formed in towns and counties to do home teaching and home visiting and to encourage handicraft employment and so on ; and the Oxford Society for the Blind was one of these. Now that the central and local government authorities are doing so much more, these voluntary societies find that there is still a great deal to do, where the elasticity and personal touch that voluntary work can bring is of most value. Our Society looks after the home teaching and home visiting services on behalf of the County Council, as its agent, and it also runs the home workers’ scheme on behalf of the County Council in the same way ; and in both city and county it does a good deal in the way of providing those extras and informal aids which are still so helpful, even when most of the general needs are provided for by Acts of Parliament.”

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